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Details Inside

'I Actually Lost Hope'

AD Smith Speaks On COVID Year, Contract Extension

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

It was a difficult year for many people, and that was especially true for Gene Smith. Ohio State's longtime athletic director had to deal with the potential cancellation of fall sports, namely football, and once those seasons were under way, Smith was tasked with keeping student-athletes safe through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite that, it was recently announced that Smith's contract has been extended through 2026. If he makes it through the entire contract, Smith will have been Ohio State's athletic director for more than 20 years.

The Buckeyes' AD since 2006 has also been in the news recently for speaking alongside State Sen. Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg) on a name, image and likeness (NIL) bill.

Smith spoke to Buckeye Sports Bulletin for an exclusive interview on June 17 and talked on a variety of topics. Some

of those include why he signed an extension, why he spoke on the NIL bill, the difficulties in Ohio State's athletic department during the pandemic and how he feels about the current state of the football, basketball and Olympic programs.

BSB: To start it off, how do you feel about where the athletic department stands today after everything involving the pandemic and otherwise?

Smith: "I think we're in a really good place. This has been a challenging year on so many levels. To face the challenges of trying to make sure our student-athletes have a chance to come to participate and compete in a pandemic, and all the social injustice issues that were always there but brought to the forefront, just so many different issues.

"We're just blessed that we were able to have an environment where our student-athletes performed academically. They really did a great job in the classroom. Thirty-six of our teams maintained a 3.0 (grade-point average)

The Interview Issue:
• Gene Smith – Cover
• Jerry Lucas – Pg. 10
• Paul Keels – Pg. 14
• Tim May – Pg. 16
• Ty Tucker – Pg. 20
• Jack Park – Pg. 23
• Jim Brown – Pg. 26
• Butch Moore – Pg. 28



FILE PHOTO

DIFFICULT YEAR – Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith said this past year, dealing with all of the repercussions of COVID-19 that included three canceled football games, was one of his hardest.

or better. We had 779 student-athletes with a GPA of 3.0 or better, and we had several conference championships and some NCAA championships.

"It was just a great year all the way around from that perspective and people stayed safe, but ultimately they had a chance to compete."

BSB: And you had mentioned how challenging it was. How difficult was this year compared to anything else you've dealt with as an athletic director?

Smith: "Having been doing this for four decades, I've had some challenges along the way obviously. When you lose a student-athlete to death, it's always a challenge. And when you have some NCAA challenges like we had in 2011. But this was really hard because there was a point in time, and I will say most of August, where I actually lost hope.

"I felt like we might not be able to give our kids a chance to compete, which is what we're all about, and so that was challenging for me. Fortunately, I work with a great team of people and our staff and then our coaches who uplifted me

and kept me motivated.

"It was hard, especially that window of time where I had uncertainty around whether or not we'd have football.

And if we didn't have football, we wouldn't have anything else. So that window, emotionally, was really trying for me and obviously the rest of my teammates in the athletic department."

BSB: Despite that difficult year, you've recently signed a contract extension to stay on at Ohio State through June 2026. What about this university has made you want to be here for so long and continue to be here for the near future?

Smith: "First of all, I really, really love what I do. I've been blessed that I'm healthy, and so I have some goals that I aspire toward achieving. And I love the people I work with, I love Columbus. There's just so much about that passion that's still there for me.

"I thought long and hard about other opportunities that

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Spielman Led The Charge On NIL

Wyatt Crosher's front-page article on the State of Ohio's adoption of NIL (name, image and likeness) legislation was timely and to the point but failed to mention earlier efforts on the part of one of Ohio State's all-time football greats. That would be All-American linebacker Chris Spielman, whose work years ago prepared the ground for today's best practices.

Many BSB readers will remember Mr. Spielman for being elected their favorite player. Others esteem him for his charity work with cancer victims in honor of his much-loved wife, Stefanie.

Either way, Mr. Spielman deserves a tip of the hat from Buckeye fans and college players everywhere.

Dave Thompson
Upper Arlington, Ohio

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

BUCKEYE SPORTS .COM

From The Message Board

The College Football Playoff working group announced on June 10 that it will be recommending an expansion to a 12-team playoff to the NCAA Division I Council. Included in the proposal were six at-large conference champion bids and home games for the opening round of the playoff. We asked readers on the Buckeye Sports Bulletin Fan Forum, as well as staff writers, what they think of the proposal. Here are some of the responses:

"Sounds good. Expansion was always inevitable. This may not be the perfect plan, but sometimes it's better to not let the perfect be the enemy of the good."

– Terrier Buck

"The bowl system is in shambles. Only the diehards watch 6-6 vs. 6-6. At some point, sponsors will stop buying ads and paying naming rights fees for the toilet bowls. Now that almost every school plays in a bowl, why not just add an extra non-conference game to everyone's schedule and cut the bowls back to around a dozen including playoffs."

– Mcarr

"Twelve is way too many. Eight honestly is a sweet spot. Let's just be real, this is being done for strictly TV business and money. It has nothing to do with them actually wanting more competing teams."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"In general, I like the 12-team playoff. I like having home games for the first round, though I wish they were also for the second round, and I like the idea of the top six conference champions making it instead of always having the Power Five champs make it. I am curious if anything will be done with divisions in conferences or with the conference championship games, two things that seem very unnecessary to me now."

– Wyatt Crosher, BSB

"I am not ashamed to admit it. I was never one who longed for a playoff or felt a void when there wasn't one. Good, bad or indifferent. From an Ohio State standpoint, for whatever reason I enjoyed the 2002 championship (two worthy teams) more than the 2014

championship. In 2014 I got a bigger kick out of beating Alabama in the semis than I did winning the championship. I suppose you could say no playoffs and the Buckeyes don't play Alabama."

– Frank Moskowitz, BSB

"The objectively correct playoff is 12 teams, with the 10 conference champions (regular season, we're getting rid of the conference championship games) and two at-large teams. Mad that your P5 team didn't make it over the MAC champion? Win your conference next time."

– Patrick Mayhorn, BSB

"This ended up being a pretty terrible solution to other teams not being able to improve – let's put them in the playoffs and let them get their doors blown off! But hey, they made it, right? Never mind that they shouldn't have been there in the first place.

"I read a ton on social media about how much fun this will be. News flash, the NCAA Tournament is the one that's fun. It isn't trying to crown the best team, it's trying to have the best tournament. The CFP is attempting to find the best team, not have the most fun. It should be a postseason for the elite – which in some years does not number four – but will no longer be.

And while there will probably be more games that matter late in the season, the biggest games will see their stakes diminished with the safety net of the CFP. Think about it: one-loss OSU vs one-loss Penn State, for not only the Big Ten East crown, but keeping hopes alive of a playoff berth. The current setup is rife with drama for the game as someone is saying goodbye to their postseason hopes. The new way? Well, someone lost, but hey, they are still in contention for a CFP berth! Whoopee!"

– Mike Wachsman, BSB

Who Is The Greatest Quarterback In Ohio State History?

Options:

- J.T. Barrett _____
- Justin Fields _____
- Joe Germaine _____
- Cornelius Greene _____
- Dwayne Haskins _____
- Bobby Hoying _____
- Rex Kern _____
- Craig Krenzel _____
- Braxton Miller _____
- Terrelle Pryor _____
- Art Schlichter _____
- Troy Smith _____

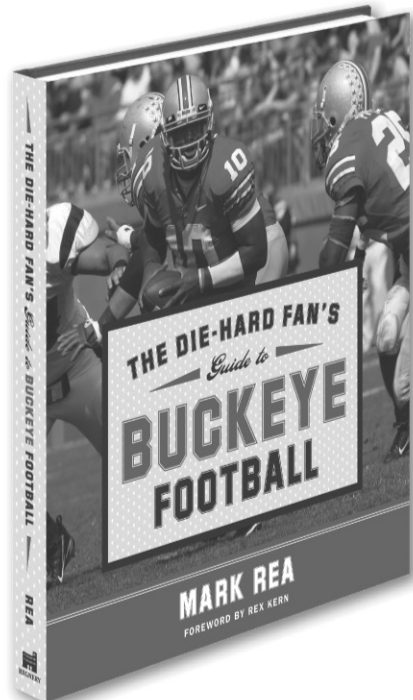
Instructions:

Number your picks 1-10 (feel free to write in any players we left off the list) and mail this ballot to Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, OH 43212. Lists can also be emailed to bsb@buckeyesports.com or subscribers can vote on the forum at BuckeyeSports.com. Please provide your name, age and any additional comments regarding your ballot. Copies of the ballot are accepted and voters are welcome to attach additional paper if more space for comments is needed.

Comments:

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No. 14	Jan. 30	No. 20	April 24
No. 15	Feb. 13	No. 21	May
No. 16	Feb. 27	No. 22	June
No. 17	March 13	No. 23	July
No. 18	March 27	No. 24	August

The 2021 Buckeye Sports Bulletin schedule is subject to change.

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40-Plus Years (And Counting) Of Memories

This marks the eighth annual Interview Issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, the edition of BSB published each July with question-and-answer features kicked off with Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith offering his state of the program.

Over the years, I have contributed stories to the issue, including last year when I interviewed former OSU president Dr. E. Gordon Gee, who remains as erudite, engaging and entertaining in his mid-70s as he did when I first interviewed him more than 30 years ago.

The Interview Issue has profiled a variety of former Ohio State sports personalities including such football players as Tom Matte, Mike Nugent and J.T. Barrett; basketball players Scoonie Penn and Samantha Prahalis; athletic department officials Jim Jones, Phyllis Bailey and Larry Romanoff; former Columbus Dispatch sportswriter Bob Hunter; and even Norman Maki, BSB's first paid subscriber when the newspaper began in 1981.

In my duties as managing editor emeritus – a fancy Greek word for semi-retired – I only occasionally contribute stories to the newspaper (with the exception of this column, of course), and I drew no Interview Issue assignment this year. Still, I thought I could use this space to interview someone who has been around college athletics for more than 40 years, authored two books on Ohio State football, and has served as a witness to history on countless occasions.

That someone would be me.

BSB: How did you decide to make sportswriting your career?

Rea: "It was a career that chose me. I grew up dreaming of playing center field for the Cincinnati Reds, and when I was a youngster, I was probably the best fielder on any team I played for. I could also hit a little, but when I got to high school and started facing breaking pitches for the first time ... well, let's just say my bat suddenly developed a hole when anything that had a wrinkle in it came my way. My Major League Baseball aspirations went away pretty quickly.

"When I was a sophomore in high school, I was asked to contribute game stories for my local newspaper. So, at the age of 15, my sportswriting career began. I thought if I couldn't play sports for a living, reporting on sports would be the next best thing."

BSB: Do you remember the first Ohio State football game you covered?

Rea: "Absolutely. It was the 1978 season opener against Penn State, a 19-0 loss that included five interceptions thrown by freshman quarterback Art Schlichter, a single-game record that still stands. It wasn't as easy for smaller newspapers to get credentialed for Ohio State football games in those days, but because Art had played at one of the two high schools that were covered by my newspaper, we got two press box passes, one sideline photo pass and a parking pass – unheard-of access back then for such a tiny paper as the one I worked for.

"With the exception of a four-year period during the mid-1980s when I worked at a newspaper in Florida, I have been covering Ohio State football in one capacity or another since 1978."

BSB: When did you begin at Buckeye Sports Bulletin?

Rea: "My first year at BSB was 1988 and coincided with John Cooper's first season as head coach of the Buckeyes. I remember during my interview, BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz mentioned that one of the perks of the job was going to a bowl game in either California or Florida every year. Of course, that first season, the Buckeyes went 4-6-1 and we all

stayed home for the holidays. Frank and I still laugh about that."

BSB: That season must have been a rough one to cover. Were there any special challenges to covering such an elite program that was so obviously experiencing a substandard year?

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Rea: "There are challenges unique to every season. That one was magnified by Coop's first season and the fact that the team's roster wasn't exactly suited to the kind of football he wanted to play. As far as BSB was concerned, I was the new guy and it took a while to get my head around a new style of doing things. We were sometimes working 80 hours a week to produce the newspaper. Add in travel to the away games, and I got a rude introduction to sleep deprivation.

"The way that 1988 season played out, with all the losses, the ill-advised commercialization and the verbal gaffes, and then the way the team snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory against Michigan, it's kind of a wonder Coop survived."

BSB: How would you rate Cooper among the Ohio State head coaches you have covered?

Rea: "That's kind of a tough question because I rate the coaches in different areas other than just wins and losses. As far as access, taking care of the media and brutal honesty, Coop ranks either at or near the top of the list. When I began covering OSU football, Woody was in his final year, and to be honest, the guy scared me to death. He was an icon, I was just a kid, and I really didn't have much interaction with him.

"When Earle Bruce took over, I thought things would be different. But Earle commanded his own respect in his own way. That rubbed some of the wrong people the wrong way, and he ultimately paid the price for it.

"Coop was (and still is) as unpretentious as they come in his profession and just a genuinely good guy. He really had no inkling of what he was walking into when he got to Ohio State, and there were those at the university who should have taken him aside and helped him navigate his way through that first year. But for whatever reason, they didn't and Coop got barbecued for it. The fact that he lasted 13 seasons is testament to that guy's character.

"I thoroughly enjoyed covering Jim Tressel even though he was the antithesis of Coop when it came to getting information. Coop would tell it like it was, and Tressel would tell you what he thought you wanted to hear. Even though his tenure ended like it did, I still have a tremendous amount of respect for Jim Tressel.

"I never really got to know Urban Meyer, and that was probably by mutual consent. I wrote a couple of things over the years that I learned Urban didn't like. But that always came courtesy of back channels. With me, third parties are not the way to go."

BSB: What kind of relationship do you have with Ryan Day?

Rea: "We don't have one, but I don't think that's anyone's fault. Over my 40-plus years of covering Ohio State football, the media's access to the team has slowly been whittled away. When I began my career, I could walk into the team locker room on virtually any day of the week and visit with any player that would visit with me. I honestly can't tell you the last time I

was in an OSU locker room – maybe the 2009 Fiesta Bowl following a 24-21 loss to Texas.

"The pandemic only exacerbated the separation from the media. Press conferences and media access, once looked upon by the university as a necessary evil, have become more restricted than ever. The time is coming when not just Ohio State but every football program will use their own websites and social media networks to control their own message. Who needs a bunch of reporters when all they do is ask a lot of dumb questions anyway?"

BSB: Who are some of your favorite Buckeyes to have covered?

Rea: "That is a long list, but I'll start with the stand-up guys who always gave straight answers after tough losses as well as big victories. Kirk Herbstreit, Greg Frey, Tim Williams, Raymont Harris, Alex Boone, Malcolm Jenkins and Ryan Shazier to name just a few. I'm sure I'm missing several, but those are the ones who immediately come to mind."

BSB: Anyone whom you had a particular problem with?

Rea: "Whenever you write an opinion column, you're going to ruffle some feathers, and I've ruffled my share over the years. But usually if someone has a problem, I'll get a phone call, I'll let them air their particular grievance and we'll go on from there. I lost count of how many times I got called on Coop's carpet, but he would rant and rave and then it was done. Never held a grudge. You have to respect that.

"There were only two times during my BSB career that things got uncomfortable. The first came in 1989 when men's basketball coach Gary Williams singled me out during a postgame press conference for reporting that he was caught interviewing for another job. Williams called me 'irresponsible' and said the story was 'incorrect,' adding that I was single-handedly destroying his program's recruiting efforts.

"The second came during the 1990 football season when running back Robert Smith, unhappy with a column I had written about him, refused to appear at a postgame press conference at Indiana until I was ushered out."

BSB: How did you handle those situations?

Rea: "Since Williams decided to criticize me in a public setting in front of my peers, I waited until the press conference was over and then I got in his face. I don't remember exactly what I said, but I'm sure my face was red when I said it. My problem was twofold. The story was true – and he knew it – and don't ever rip me in front of my colleagues.

"As far as the Smith episode was concerned, I simply handed my recorder to another reporter and left the press conference. I still had everything on tape, so the tantrum really didn't make any difference. Why did I agree to leave rather than stand my ground? On the road, everyone is on deadline and I saw no benefit to ruining everyone else's afternoon when I was going to get the information anyway. Sometimes, you have to pick your battles."

BSB: What is your favorite college football stadium?

Rea: "There are none better than Ohio Stadium. The architecture, the setting – all perfect for watching college football on a cool, crisp autumn afternoon. They keep trying to modernize it and update it, but the character of the old Horseshoe remains.

"In terms of any stadium not located on the banks of the Olentangy River, I would have to say the Rose Bowl and Husky Stadium at the University of Washington are situated among the most beautiful settings I have ever seen.



CFP Committee Recommends Move To 12-Team Playoff

The College Football Playoff working group announced on June 10 that it will be recommending a 12-team playoff to the NCAA Division I Council.

"The four-team format has been very popular and is a big success," the members of the four-person working group said in a statement. "But it's important that we consider the opportunity for more teams and more student-athletes to participate in the playoff. After reviewing numerous options, we believe this proposal is the best option to increase participation, enhance the regular season and grow the national excitement of college football."

The release dived further into the details of what the proposed 12-team playoff would look like. It would be composed of six automatic qualifiers and six at-large teams, the latter picked by the College Football Playoff committee while the former six spots go to the six highest-ranked conference champions. The top four teams earn a first-round bye.

The No. 5-8 seeds will host the No. 9-12 seeds in the first round of the playoff, marking the first non-neutral-site games of the playoff era. The winners of those matchups will square off with the top four seeds in an assortment of neutral site, New Year's Six bowl matchups. The semifinals and finals will also be played in neutral sites with bowl affiliations, as they have been since the playoff began in 2014.

"This is a very exciting moment for college football," the working group members said in

the statement. "We think we can capture what student-athletes and fans love about the game and extend it to more people in more places, while enhancing what's great about the regular season."

For the sake of reference, the 2020 playoff under this system would have seen Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State and Oklahoma receive first-round byes, while Notre Dame would have hosted Coastal Carolina, Texas A&M would have hosted Indiana, Florida would have hosted Iowa State and Cincinnati would have hosted Georgia. The winner of the Cincinnati-Georgia game would have faced Alabama, as is true down the line.

The next step for potential implementation came on June 17-18, when the management committee reviewed and endorsed the plan, sending it forward to the CFP board of managers, which also approved the plan.

Executive director Bill Hancock laid out the next steps beyond this in his statement.

"Now that the working group has presented its proposal, the management committee will solicit input from university presidents, coaches, athletics directors, student-athletes and others. That input will help inform what the management committee recommends to the ultimate decision-makers – the presidents and chancellors who serve on the board of managers. I do want to remind you that the final decision will be made by the board of managers, and that decision will not come before this fall."

Any format changes will not take effect until 2023 at the earliest.

DeWine Signs NIL Executive Order

Ohio governor Mike DeWine – flanked by Lt. Governor Jon Husted, state Sen. Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg), former Ohio State quarterback Cardale Jones, Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith and Ohio State president Kristina Johnson – officially signed an executive order allowing student-athletes in the state of Ohio to profit from their name, image and likeness rights on June 28 at the Statehouse.

"Thirty-eight days ago, Gene (Smith) and I made a promise that we would have name, image and likeness here in Ohio before July 1," Antani said. "Today, that promise is being delivered, thanks to the governor and lieutenant governor."

The signing ended a whirlwind month (and some change) around the issue in Ohio, as

2021 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2020 Record
Sept. 2	at Minnesota	8 p.m.	FOX	3-4
Sept. 11	OREGON*	Noon	FOX	4-3
Sept. 18	TULSA*	3:30 p.m.	FS1	6-3
Sept. 25	AKRON	TBA	TBA	1-5
Oct. 2	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	3-6
Oct. 9	MARYLAND	Noon	TBA	2-3
Oct. 23	at Indiana*	TBA	TBA	6-2
Oct. 30	PENN STATE	TBA	TBA	4-5
Nov. 6	at Nebraska	TBA	TBA	3-5
Nov. 13	PURDUE	TBA	TBA	2-4
Nov. 20	MICHIGAN STATE	TBA	TBA	2-5
Nov. 27	at Michigan	Noon	FOX	2-4
Dec. 4	Big Ten Championship**	TBA	TBA	

* 2020 bowl team ** at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

the state rushed to keep pace with its counterparts in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas in passing NIL legislation by July 1. Antani originally introduced the bill in late May alongside Smith at Ohio State's Covelli Center, citing the need to keep in line with the states at the front of the issue, both for the sake of Ohio athletes and for recruiting. However, DeWine confirmed that his executive order would take effect July 1, keeping Ohio – and by extension Ohio State – on a level playing ground with those states.

"We want the best talent to know that they can succeed and prosper in Ohio and that we are committed to those athletes," Husted said. "Across the country, it is emerging that there's a lot of bipartisan support for this kind of action, and as amateur sports – particularly NCAA sports – are changing, we in Ohio are going to change right along with it to make sure our universities and athletes can succeed."

"We all know what this is about," said Randy Gardner, chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education. "This is about Ohio's ability to continue to compete, and whether it's on the football field or the basketball court, or a college classroom or a science lab, Ohio competes."

This comes after Antani's bill nearly lost its widespread bipartisan support on June 25, when it traveled through the Ohio House of Representatives and gained an unrelated amendment that would ban transgender girls from girls high school sports. The executive order issued June 28 does not feature that amendment, which DeWine disapproved of three days earlier.

"This issue is best addressed outside of government, through individual sports leagues and athletic associations, including the Ohio High School Athletic Association, who can tailor policies to meet the needs of their member athletes and member institutions," DeWine said in a June 25 statement.

The NCAA released an interim bill shortly before NIL laws took effect July 1, announcing that all student-athletes would be allowed to profit from their NIL rights, regardless of state, while the NCAA works on official legislation.

Antani said that he will continue to pursue a legislative option but that, for now, this is a suitable solution.

Supreme Court Rules Against NCAA

The Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the NCAA can't enforce rules limiting education-related benefits for student-athletes June 21, a decision that provides an incremental increase in how student-athletes are compensated.

Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote the court's opinion, which upheld an earlier decision from a United States district court judge that ruled the NCAA violated antitrust laws by placing limits on the education-benefits that schools can provide for student-athletes.

Gorsuch wrote that the NCAA "seeks immunity from the normal operation of antitrust laws." He also said that allowing colleges

to offer enhanced education-related benefits "may encourage scholastic achievement and allow student-athletes compensation more consistent with the value they bring to their schools."

While the case doesn't decide whether athletes can be paid salaries, it does help determine whether colleges can offer them thousands of dollars in educational benefits such as graduate scholarships, study abroad programs and tutoring.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote a concurring opinion that took a stronger stance. He wrote that the NCAA's restriction of any compensation, including payments for athletic accomplishments, might no longer hold weight in future antitrust challenges.

"The NCAA is not above the law," Kavanaugh wrote. "The NCAA couches its arguments for not paying student-athletes in innocuous labels. But the labels cannot disguise reality: The NCAA's business model would be flatly illegal in almost any other industry in America."

Federal antitrust lawsuits continue to chip away at national amateurism rules. Politicians in 19 states have passed laws that reprimand the NCAA for not permitting student-athletes to be compensated.

The United States Congress is currently debating multiple bills aimed at reforming the NCAA. The Supreme Court ruling on NCAA v. Alston is a victory for student-athletes and a large blow to the nonprofit organization.

Still, NCAA President Mark Emmert remains optimistic that the NCAA can reach an agreement with student-athletes about keeping the line between college and professional sports clear.

"Even though the decision does not directly address name, image and likeness, the NCAA remains committed to supporting NIL benefits for student-athletes," Emmert said in a statement following the ruling. "Additionally, we remain committed to working with Congress to chart a path forward, which is a point the Supreme Court expressly stated in its ruling."

Ohio State Adds UNC Kicker

With Blake Haubeil gone after three seasons as the starting kicker, Ohio State has gone to the transfer portal, adding North Carolina's Noah Ruggles as a graduate transfer on June 9.

"Thank you God. To those of you who never stopped believing in me, thank you," Ruggles said in the tweet. "I am blessed beyond belief. With that being said, I have accepted a scholarship offer and am committed to THE Ohio State University."

While with the Tar Heels, Ruggles saw the most action in 2019, appearing in all 13 games. He connected on 19 of his 27 field-goal attempts and hit all 45 extra points. Aside from that season, he played only once, against West Carolina, both in 2018 and 2020. He hit all three PATs in those two matchups.

Ruggles will be competing primarily with redshirt freshman Jake Seibert, who found time last season when Haubeil was out earlier

No BSB Print For Seven Weeks

The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, our 41st Football Preview Issue, will be mailed on Aug. 24. This is our longest publishing gap of each year. However, Ohio State sports news is ongoing, and there is no reason for BSB readers to miss any of the action as the Buckeyes prepare for another run at college football's national championship. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff keeps up with all the action at our BuckeyeSports.com website.

The BSB staff provides daily posts on any and all Ohio State sports news, including the latest in football recruiting, as well as presenting reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Additionally, staff members man the BuckeyeSports.com Forum, interacting with subscribers on the hot topics of the day.

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Readers who have been experiencing postal delivery problems can also read the complete edition of each issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin online at BuckeyeSports.com immediately upon completion. Your copy of the paper will still arrive in your mailbox at the usual time.

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

in the season with an injury and then again for the national championship game against Alabama when Haubeil was out with COVID-19. Seibert hit all 16 of his extra points and went 1 of 2 on field-goal attempts, making one from 23 yards against the Crimson Tide.

Ruggles may also compete with fifth-year senior Dominic DiMaccio, who took over kickoff duties last season. DiMaccio kicked 37 of Ohio State's 60 kickoffs, earning five touchbacks.

Harris, Gardiner No Longer With Team

Ohio State's receivers room may be one of the nation's most talented, but it's also undergone a fairly tumultuous offseason in the depth department. Redshirt freshman Gee Scott moved to tight end, and senior Demario McCall switched to cornerback. Senior Kamryn Babb suffered another injury and seems unlikely to play sustained time as a Buckeye, given his history. All the way back in December, Mookie Cooper announced that he'd be departing after just one season and transferring to Missouri.

Then, in May, returning starter Jameson Williams announced his intention to transfer, landing in a much younger and more open Alabama receivers room. He cited, in an interview with Alabama reporter Andrew Bone, confusion about where he fit in a growing room at Ohio State.

"I wasn't certain of my role in the offense," Williams said. "The receiver room got crowded. I just decided I needed a fresh start."

Now the Buckeyes have lost two more veteran depth receivers, as Elijah Gardiner and Jaylen Harris have ended their Ohio State football careers.

Gardiner came to Ohio State as a three-star recruit out of Kemp, Texas, known for his track speed and size (6-5, 185 pounds). Harris is an Ohio product, coming to Ohio State as a four-star out of Cleveland Heights but never catching on in Columbus. Neither player contributed outside of clean-up duty at the end of games and on special teams.

That leaves the Buckeyes with an obvious top three of Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba but a whole lot of questions behind that. Former five-stars Julian Fleming and Emeka Egbuka figure to factor into the equation, along with four-star freshmen Marvin Harrison Jr. and Jayden Ballard, but that's just seven healthy, full-time receivers on scholarship.

Diallo Transferring To San Jose State

Former Ohio State forward Ibrahima Diallo has chosen his transfer location and will be joining San Jose State.

Diallo never was able to make a strong impact with the Buckeyes, finishing with 11 total points and 19 total rebounds in 13 appearances. The 6-10, 220-pound forward out of Saly, Senegal, will have three years of eligibility remaining due to a free year of eligibility last season.

The sophomore big man will be joining a San Jose State team that struggled mightily last season, finishing with a 5-16 record and a 3-13 record in the Mountain West. He will also be joining Tim Miles, who is coming in for his first season for the Spartans. Miles has been a head coach for more than two decades, most recently at Nebraska from 2012-19.

Aquilla Completes Shot Put Sweep

Ohio State women's track and field stand-out Adelaide Aquilla completed her sweep of the 2020-21 season titles on June 10 when she secured the outdoor shot put national crown. The Buckeye thrower had already claimed

indoor and outdoor Big Ten titles and won the indoor shot put crown at the indoor national championships.

Aquilla bested Wisconsin's Josie Schaefer with an 18.98m throw, more than enough to edge out the Badger, who put up an 18.29m result. Aquilla was actually a bit under the throw that earned her the Big Ten crown, hitting 19.12m – an Ohio State record and her personal best – on her sixth and final throw in that event.

Teammates Sade Olatoye and Divine Oladipo competed in the shot put finals as well, recording 17.26m and 16.76m throws and checking in at No. 8 and No. 14, respectively. Olatoye also finished No. 7 in the hammer throw.

The Buckeyes finished at No. 11 in the team standings for the event.

Fields Inks First NFL Contract

Ohio State's top draft pick has signed his rookie deal.

Quarterback Justin Fields signed a four-year, \$18.9 million contract with the Chicago Bears, according to a report by NFL Network's Tom Pelissero.

Fields was taken 11th overall by the Bears, becoming the first Ohio State player and fourth quarterback off the board, following Clemson's Trevor Lawrence (1st, Jacksonville), BYU's Zach Wilson (2nd, New York Jets) and North Dakota State's Trey Lance (3rd, San Francisco).

The former five-star quarterback out of Kennesaw (Ga.) Harrison played two seasons with the Buckeyes after transferring out of Georgia. He was named Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year both years, finishing his time at Ohio State with 5,373 passing yards, 867 rushing yards and 78 total touchdowns while earning a 20-2 record as a starter.

Fields, Aquilla Named OSU Athletes Of The Year

Fields and Aquilla were named the university's male and female athletes of the year on June 17. They will both be placed on the Big Ten Athlete of the Year ballot, which will be selected on July 13.

Fields finished 2020 with 2,100 passing yards, 383 rushing yards and 27 total touchdowns in eight games played.

He becomes the third straight football player to earn the honor, following Dwayne Haskins in 2019 and Chase Young in 2020. Overall, he is the 12th football player to be named male athlete of the year.

Aquilla was one of the most dominant athletes in any sport in the country, as mentioned, winning the Big Ten indoor championship, the NCAA indoor championship, the Big Ten outdoor championship and the NCAA outdoor championship in shot put.

Along with the victories, Aquilla broke school records at the 2021 NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships and the Big Ten championships, the latter of which was a record she had already held and then broke by almost three feet.

Aquilla becomes the 12th track and field athlete, man or woman, to earn the athlete of the year honor. She is the first since Olatoye won the women's honor in 2019.

Clemons, Aquilla, Battle Headed To Olympics

Former Ohio State sprinter Christina Clemons qualified for her first Olympics on June 20 after finishing third in the 100-meter hurdles at the U.S. Olympic track and field trials.

Clemons finished the event in 12.53 seconds, trailing Keni Harrison (12.47 seconds) and defending Olympic gold medalist Brianna

Become A Buckeye Sports Bulletin VIP

Now is the time for loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers to show their support through our VIP subscription program as we all work through the coronavirus crisis.

As most of you know, the newspaper business these days is challenging in the best of times. BSB is now facing more challenges with recent events that have slowed the economy.

"We want to thank the many BSB readers who have stepped up and shown their support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "It is a true vote of confidence in what we are doing now and what we have done the previous 39 years."

A VIP subscription can easily pay for itself each year with special VIP discounts.

VIP subscribers enjoy a 20 percent discount at the new Conrads College Gifts at Easton. VIP subscribers also enjoy a 5 percent discount on any Ohio State football trip booked through Reynolds Travel. And VIP subscribers receive a certificate good for \$10 off at Roosters restaurants, the "Fun, Casual Joint."

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

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

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

The following are our Elite Wachsman, Elite and Scarlet VIP subscribers. Brutus level VIPs will have their names listed at a later date.

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

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Scarlet VIPs: Anthony Ananthanarayanan, Rochester, Mich.; Greg Brooks, Gahanna, Ohio; Marty Brumbaugh, Troy, Ohio; Dennis Dahm, Sandusky, Ohio; Tom Goila, Cincinnati; Doug Harris, Lima, Ohio; Joseph Huber, Walpole, Mass.; Alan Lord, Reynoldsburg, Ohio; Lawrence Romanoff, Powell, Ohio; Jim Shaw, Lake Forest, Calif.; William Torok, Girard, Ohio; J.D. Wientjes, Peoria, Ill.; Anonymous, Dallas; Anonymous, Norwalk, Ohio.

Rollins-McNeal (12.51 seconds).

After the race, Clemons held back tears, describing what qualifying for the Olympics means to her and what she has overcome to earn a spot on the American roster.

Clemons overcame a torn Achilles in 2013 and lingering hamstring issues to become one of America's best track athletes. After recovering from her injuries, Clemons claimed a silver medal in the 60-meter hurdles at the 2018 World Indoor Championships and a gold medal in the mixed shuttle hurdle at the 2019 IAAF World Relays.

Before her professional career, Clemons was one of the most decorated athletes in the history of Ohio State athletics.

From 2008-2012, Clemons was an 11-time All-American, 10-time Big Ten champion and two-time national champion for Ohio State. The Waldorf, Md., native holds numerous school records in track and field, including the 60-meter dash, 60-meter hurdles, 100-meter hurdles and the 4x100-meter relay.

Clemons' collegiate accolades led to her induction into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017. She is the latest of 12 women's track and field athletes to earn the school's highest honor for athletic achievement.

Clemons will be joined on the Olympic track team by Aquilla.

She qualified for the shot put trials finals with a fifth-place finish on an 18.61m throw in the first round before launching an 18.95m toss in the finals to claim third place, with the top three throwers advancing to the Olympics in Tokyo.

She finished behind Jessica Ramsey

(20.12m) and Raven Saunders (19.96m). The former is a new trials record, while the latter comes from a 2016 Olympian in Saunders.

Current sprinter Anavia Battle finished in third place in the 200-meter Olympic Trials, which was enough to become another Buckeye to qualify for the U.S. Olympic team.

Battle ran the 200-meter in 21.95 seconds, just behind Gabby Thomas and Jenna Prandini, who finished in 21.61 and 21.89 seconds, respectively. The time was a personal best for Battle. Her previous best was 22.28 seconds, which was not only her record but a school record.

In earlier rounds, Battle ran a 22.37 to qualify for the semifinals with a fifth-place finish. She then ran a 22.32 in the semifinals to earn fourth place and qualify for the finals.

Battle is the 26th incoming, current or former Buckeye to qualify for the upcoming Olympics.

She joins swimmers Abeysinghe, Armstrong and Gaziev; women's track stars Aquilla, Maggie Barrie (Sierra Leone) and Clemons; former gymnasts Misha Koudionov (New Zealand) and Alec Yoder (United States); former soccer player Nichelle Prince (Canada); men's track athlete Eric Harrison (Trinidad and Tobago); four fencing standouts in Marc-Antoine Blais Belanger (Canada), Diego Cervantes (Mexico), Elanor Harvey (Canada) and Alanna Goldie (Canada); synchronized swimmers Emily Armstrong (Canada) and Ruby Remati (United States); rowers Aina Cid Centelles (Spain), Anneta

Continued On Page 6



Continued From Page 5

Kyridou (Greece), Maria Kyridou (Greece), Alessandra Montesano (Italy), Ilse Paulis (Netherlands) and Elodie Ravera (France); shooters Henry Leverett (United States) and Jack Leverett (United States); and wrestler Kyle Snyder (United States).

Women's Golf Hires Strom

Ohio State announced Lisa Strom as the sixth head coach in the history of the women's golf team, following her time leading the Texas State and Kent State programs.

Strom returns to Ohio State for the third time in her career. She played for the women's golf team from 1995-2000 and was an assistant coach for the Buckeyes from 2011-2016.

"It's just a dream come true to be able to come back to my alma mater and return to Columbus," Strom said. "It just feels like home, and I'm super excited. I don't think I can fully put it into words. I now get a chance to return to the university that has given me so much."

Strom will run the women's golf program, replacing her former coach and most recent head women's golf coach Therese Hession, who will remain the director of golf for both the men's and women's programs.

Hession had coached the women's program since 1991 and led the Buckeyes to 11 Big Ten championships and 25 regional appearances. In 2018, Ohio State promoted her to the director of golf.

"I am thrilled to have Lisa Strom rejoin our golf program," Hession said. "Her knowledge and now 10 years of coaching experience will benefit both our men's and women's golf teams in a big way."

As an Ohio State assistant coach, Strom helped lead the program to six straight NCAA regional appearances and four trips to the NCAA championships. The Buckeyes won nine tournaments, including three consecutive Big Ten championships in 2014, 2015 and

2016.

Following her time as an assistant at Ohio State, Strom went to Texas State for three seasons. She led the program to two tournament titles and a runner-up finish at the 2019 Sun Belt Conference championship. In her last year with the Bobcats, Strom's team set seven school records and finished with the highest final season ranking in program history.

Strom then returned to Ohio to coach Kent State, one of the top programs in the area. In two seasons, she led the team to nine tournament titles and won the program's 22nd consecutive MAC championship. Strom and the Golden Flashes competed in the NCAA regional at Ohio State's Scarlet Course in May, finishing tied for fifth in an 18-team field, advancing to the NCAA championships.

Strom's Ohio State career includes two All-Big Ten honors and four Academic All-Big Ten honors. She was a member of the 1999 Big Ten championship team and finished first at the 2000 NCAA East Regional Championship.

As a professional from 2000-2011, Strom played 50 LPGA-sponsored events on the LPGA tour. In 2007, she earned a career-best finish of third at the Navistar LPGA Classic. Strom also competed on the Futures Tour for seven seasons, with her best finish being second at the 2002 El Paso Futures Golf Classic. She is a three-time winner of the Ohio Women's Open and two-time champion of the Michigan Women's Open.

Armstrong Earns Olympic Bid

Ohio State sophomore swimmer Hunter Armstrong finished second in the 100-meter backstroke at the U.S. Olympic swimming trials on June 15, securing his spot on the United States Olympic team that will compete in the pool this summer in Tokyo for the Olympics. The full team was announced on June 19.

He'll be the first Buckeye to earn a spot on the U.S. Olympic swimming team since Yoshi Oyakawa in 1956.

Armstrong checked in with a 52.48-second time in the finals, his best at the trials. Ryan Murphy, a 2016 gold medalist in the event, took the top spot with a 52.33-second time. Armstrong managed to beat out Shaine Casas (52.76) and Bryce Mefford (52.92), who finished third and fourth, respectively.

"We are all just incredibly proud and happy for Hunter," said Bill Dorenkott, Ohio State director of swimming and diving. "Hunter is a proud Ohioan who has just continued to get better and better. Ohio State has a rich history of U.S. Olympians and medal winners, but it's been a while since we had one so this is a wonderful moment for Hunter, his hometown of Dover and for the Ohio State program."

Armstrong was a menace for Ohio State as well, scoring in seven events at the Big Ten championships and earning four All-American honors at the NCAA championships, helping

to lead the Buckeyes to a third-place and seventh-place finish at the two events, respectively.

Armstrong is working now at the Olympic training camp in Hawaii before heading out to Tokyo for the games, which are slated to run from July 24 to Aug. 1 for swimming specifically.

"We are thrilled for Hunter and the opportunity he now has to represent the United States at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics," Dorenkott said. "He is swimming extremely well and is within striking distance of the world record (51.97 set by Murphy in 2016). I think he will have some terrific Olympic Games swims."

Two more faces familiar to the Ohio State men's swimming team – one current and one graduated – will be joining Armstrong at the Tokyo Olympics this summer. A school release confirmed that graduated freestyle swimmer Matthew Abeysinghe and rising junior Ruslan Gaziev have qualified for the Olympic swim teams of Sri Lanka and Canada, respectively.

A 2021 graduate from Ohio State, this will be Abeysinghe's second stint at the Olympics with Sri Lanka. He also swam for the nation in 2016, making him the first Sri Lankan swimmer to reach the Olympic swimming qualifying standard. He was a seven-time All-American in Columbus, racing in the 200 free, 400 free and 800 free relays.

Meanwhile, Gaziev's qualification is especially meaningful for him, after he took the 2021 season off to focus on making his national team. He swam for Ohio State as a freshman in 2018-19 and as a sophomore in 2019-20 and will return as a junior next season.

His qualification came after he finished second in the 100 freestyle finals with a 48.81-second time. He'll be part of the 4x100-meter relay team for Canada at the games.

Former SID Homan Passes Away At 94

Longtime former Ohio State director of sports information, Marv Homan passed away at 94 years old, a school release confirmed on June 8. Homan served in the sports information office from 1949 – just one year after graduating from Ohio State – through 1987, working directly with legends of the program such as coaches Earle Bruce, Wes Fesler and Woody Hayes and players Howard "Hopalong" Cassady, Archie Griffin and Vic Janowicz.

He took over as the sports information director in 1973 – a role that he filled until his retirement in 1987. During his time with the Buckeyes, he also spent 30 years as the voice of the Buckeyes on the radio and later as a television play-by-play announcer. He missed just one of the 403 football games Ohio State played in during his 39 years in Columbus.

"Marv witnessed as much Ohio State football history as anyone," said BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz. "All of Ohio State sports,

really. He witnessed many of the greats from Vic Janowicz, to Hop Cassady, to the Super Sophs, to Archie Griffin to Keith Byars. He was at Snow Bowls, Rose Bowls and, sadly, the 1978 Gator Bowl.

"He was there for the greatest era in Ohio State basketball, and he was there for the birth and growth of women's sports at Ohio State.

"But most importantly, he was a throwback to a kinder, gentler era – an era when the relationship between the sports information office and the media was much less adversarial than it can sometimes be today.

"I know I speak for all of us who worked with him when I say we will miss him."

His lengthy career earned plenty of plaques. He was given the Arch Ward Meritorious Service Award by the College Sports Information Directors of America in 1988 and the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame Loyalty Award 10 years later in 1998. In 2007, he became one of just four Ohio State administrators to be inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame.

Homan is survived by his daughter, Jane Ann, and son-in-law, Logan Parrott. He and his late wife, Dorothy May Homan, had six grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. In addition to daughter Jane Ann, they had a son David, who passed away in 2018.

Johnson Transferring To Nebraska

Ohio State will run into a familiar face this fall when it squares off with Nebraska in Lincoln on Nov. 6. Former Buckeye cornerback Tyreke Johnson announced on June 13 that he'll be finishing out his career with the Cornhuskers after spending his first three seasons of college football in Columbus.

Johnson never caught on at Ohio State, despite his five-star status coming out of high school. Considered the nation's No. 21 overall player and No. 2 safety in the class of 2018, Johnson looked to shift to cornerback with the Buckeyes. However, he seemed to fall behind quickly, as he dealt with multiple defensive backs coaches in his time at OSU.

He announced his entry into the transfer portal on May 12, after playing just 77 snaps in 2020 (according to Eleven Warriors' Dan Hope). The Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy product will look to contribute right away for a Nebraska secondary that has seen its fair share of turmoil in recent seasons, with just one established playmaker (Cam Taylor-Britt) in the room.

Women's Hockey Nabs RMU Trio

Fresh off a trip to the Frozen Four, Ohio State's women's hockey team is right back on the road to conference and national title contention. The Buckeyes, who lose just a few players from that 2020-21 team – namely senior forward Tatum Skaggs and senior forward Emma Maltais (who will return next season but is taking this year to focus on the Olympics) – announced on June 14 that they've added a trio of players from what was one of the nation's top programs.

With Robert Morris ending its women's hockey program recently, forward Lexi Templeman, defender Emily Curlett and goalie Raygan Kirk will be joining Ohio State this upcoming season.

"Our job here is to win national championships and mold young women," said head coach Nadine Muzerall. "I am very protective of our team's integrity and reputation that has been earned over the years by these incredible young women. It was very evident early in my conversations with all three young ladies that they held the standards of excellence that we uphold within our culture. So when I was given the chance to land impactful players

Podcast Talks Impact Of Washington

Buckeye Sports Bulletin now has a podcast to work in tandem with BuckeyeSports.com which keeps BSB subscribers informed on all of the latest around Ohio State football, basketball, recruiting and more.

On the most recent episode released on July 2, we break down where the Ohio State men's basketball team goes after the departure of guard Duane Washington to the NBA draft. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin Podcast is currently on its schedule of one weekly episode, released on Friday mornings.

The BSB Podcast covers Ohio State from all angles, with input from beat writers who cover everything from football and recruiting to men's volleyball and women's hockey, as well everything in between. With BSB's deep Rolodex of former Buckeye players, coaches and college sports analysts around the country, as well as in-house experts Joe Dempsey and Chase Brown, the BSB podcast has you covered on all things Buckeye, all the time. Associate editors Patrick Mayhorn and Wyatt Crosher host with a constantly rotating guest list to get insight and analysis on the latest in Ohio State news.

The show is free for everyone. To find it, go to your favorite podcast app or website and type in "Buckeye Sports Bulletin Podcast," and click the subscribe button. You can listen on Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, Audible, Google Podcasts, iHeartRadio, Podbean, Spotify, Stitcher and anywhere else that podcasts are found. For those of you who are new to the podcast world, the show is also posted at 10 a.m. every Friday on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as in the BSB Fan Forum.

who have a strong character and high academics – you do it.”

Templeman is likely the highest-impact player of the bunch. She served as a captain for the Colonials last season, leading the team with seven goals and 23 assists while earning first-team All-College Hockey America honors. She comes to Ohio State with 127 career points in 130 games, scoring 34 goals and racking up 93 assists.

“When Coach Muzerall reached out, I was thrilled,” said Templeman. “Having played against them in the past and knowing what their style was, I thought it was a perfect fit.”

Curlett, a native of Lapeer, Mich., will immediately be one of the most experienced defenders on Muzerall’s squad. She played 130 games for Robert Morris over her career, and leaves as the program’s best offensive defender, scoring a program-high 43 goals. She was named to the 2021 All-USCHO third team and led the nation in power-play goals in 2019-20 with 13.

“When I took into account all the resources that I’d have at Ohio State, the choice really became obvious,” said Curlett. “The chance to be a part of a program that plays and wins at the highest level along with the academic opportunities was something I simply couldn’t pass up.

“I remember being really impressed not only with how skilled they were but also how

hard they played. That’s something that left an impression on me.”

Kirk comes to Ohio State with 38 starts in the last two seasons, an impressive 1.91 goals-against average and a .939 save percentage. Star Buckeye goalie Andrea Braendli is returning for her senior season, so Kirk will have to battle to earn a starting role – though she has recorded a better goals-against average and save percentage than the returning Ohio State netminder (Braendli allowed 1.99 goals per game and had a .915 save percentage). Regardless of the order, this move all but locks up the best goaltending duo in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association for the Buckeyes.

“My conversations with Coach Muzerall and the players went really well,” said Kirk. “I know Ohio State plays in a tough league against the best competition in the country, and I can’t wait to be a part of that. I love the culture and the way the team goes about its business. I could sense right away that I’d be welcomed here.”

Ohio State and its new players will take the ice next on Sept. 24 and 25 for a two-game series against St. Thomas.

Skaggs Picked No. 4 In NWHL Draft

Former Ohio State women’s hockey forward Tatum Skaggs will be suiting up to play

professionally this upcoming season – though it may not be with the team that selected her with the fourth pick in the National Women’s Hockey League draft on June 29. Shortly after the Toronto Six made Skaggs its second selection in the first round of the draft, Skaggs tweeted out gratitude to the team but also shared that she had committed to play professionally in Vienna, Austria, next season.

“Thank you to everyone who has supported me and joined me in my decision,” Skaggs shared. “I have decided to continue my hockey career in Vienna, Austria for this upcoming season. Once a Buckeye, always a Buckeye.”

Skaggs will be playing for the EHV Sabres in the European Women’s Hockey League, though it’s unclear if she has committed to a long-term deal overseas or if she’ll be returning to North America and suiting up for Toronto in 2022 and beyond.

If she does arrive at Toronto, she’ll be joining a pretty strong – and almost completely brand-new – team. The Six went 4-1 in their inaugural season in the NWHL in 2020-21, which they joined following the collapse of the Canadian Women’s Hockey League following the 2018-19 season.

The Six came up short of a title in year one in their new league, falling to the Boston Pride in the semifinals of the 2021 playoffs, but look to return a talented roster while adding No. 3 overall pick Maegan Beres, a forward from

Boston College, No. 5 overall pick defender Taylor Davison from York University and potentially Skaggs.

Skaggs finished her Ohio State career as one of the all-time greatest scorers in program history, helping the Buckeyes to two Frozen Four appearances in four seasons. She racked up 65 goals and 59 assists during her four seasons as a Buckeye forward.

First-Class Upgrade

This is the time of year when we begin encouraging readers, especially those out of state, to upgrade their subscriptions to first-class mail for football season. It is especially true this year. The reports we have been hearing about projected delivery times going forward are disturbing, to say the least. Think back to mail in December!

You can upgrade your Buckeye Sports Bulletin delivery to first-class mail in an envelope for football season for \$28. Upgrade through playoff and football recruiting season for \$38. Send your check, money order or credit card information to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Or you can order by phone with a credit card 24 hours a day at (614) 486-2202. Be sure to mention either the “football” upgrade or the “recruiting” upgrade.

Chase Brown, Wyatt Crosher and Patrick Mayhorn contributed to this article.

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1986

Former Ohio State quarterback Art Schlichter – who had most recently been released after the fifth game of the 1985 season by the Indianapolis Colts – was working to get back on his feet. He signed a contract with the Buffalo Bills and was to report to the Bills’ summer camp in early July. He would be one of five quarterbacks battling for a starting position on a team that had posted only a 2-14 record a year prior.

“I don’t know whether you would call it a break or just pursuing your career,” said Schlichter before reporting to the Bills. “I just feel like I can still play the game of football and if the right opportunity is there, I think I’m going to get the chance to play.”

Getting the opportunity to play for Buffalo would be the second comeback for Schlichter. The fourth player chosen in the 1982 pro draft, Schlichter played in three games during his rookie season before it was revealed that he was heavily into gambling. Debts owed to bookmakers were his downfall. He was suspended from the NFL for the 1983 season.

The first comeback was in 1984 when he started the final five games of the season for the Colts – then based in Baltimore. After waging a mini war with Mike Pagel during preseason camp in 1985, Schlichter won the starting job with the Colts.

However, after a broken thumb and a knee injury sent him to the bench, the Colts cut their losses with the former first-round pick and set him adrift, until the Bills decided to bring him aboard in hopes that they were landing a reformed and healthy Schlichter.

30 Years Ago – 1991

Hurt by the graduation of two-year starting center Dan Beatty, the Ohio State offensive line sustained another blow in late June. Two team sources confirmed to BSB that senior offensive guard Roy Nichols would miss the 1991 season after leaving school with academic problems.

Nichols, who had started seven games at tackle in 1990, likely would have been a starter in the fall at one guard position. Sources close to the program also indicated that senior nose guard Corey Pargo was facing an uphill climb in retaining his eligibility for the 1991 season as well.

25 Years Ago – 1996

When Ohio State opened the doors for its annual summer football camp on June 22, Chuck Stobart was right there alongside his fellow OSU assistant coaches, welcoming young players to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

The 63-year-old Stobart reported to work the camp just over six weeks after undergoing quadruple bypass heart surgery at University Hospitals.

“He was cleared the day before camp started and said, ‘I’m coming,’” said OSU assistant coach Bill Conley.

Stobart was happy to be allowed to return to the practice field.

“They cleared me at 8:15 Friday morning (June 21), and that is one of the best phone calls I’ve ever had,” he said. “It’s been just over six weeks, and I feel pretty good.”

20 Years Ago – 2001

OSU coach Jim Tressel got one order of business out of the way June 17, when he convened the Buckeyes at the start of their summer conditioning program. He had the returning players vote on captains for the 2001 season. The captains vote was the earliest in recent memory at OSU. Tressel’s predecessor, John Cooper, typically had his teams select their captains midway through fall camp.

Two of the team’s four choices were repeats from 2000 with quarterback Steve Bellisari and linebacker Joe Cooper returning in their roles as captains, making them the fifth and sixth players in Ohio State history to serve two seasons as captains.

New to the role would be a pair of their senior classmates, defensive tackle Mike Collins and fullback Jamar Martin.

“These are four exceptional young men who will do a terrific job of representing our team and this university,” Tressel said. “All four of them have been around the program and know how much it means to be an Ohio State captain. I know all of them are humbled to have been chosen by their teammates.

“All four of these guys have trained really hard. I expect them to be outstanding captains.”

15 Years Ago – 2006

ABC announced in June that it would exercise its option and move the 2006 rendition of the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry from its traditional noon slot.

The Buckeyes would host their archrivals beginning at 3:30 p.m. Eastern on Nov. 18, ending a long tradition of The Game starting at either noon or 1 p.m.

“ABC actually has that option (of deciding when games are played), and they asked us to consider moving it to 3:30,” OSU sports information director Steve Snapp told reporters. “The rationale was that we would get better coverage in the western half of the United States. More stations would carry it. By going this way, we get better exposure.”

Snapp said the network never asked about moving the OSU-Michigan game to the nighttime, however.

“It would be awfully cold that time of year,” he said. “With our climate, it would be difficult to do.”

Ohio State was scheduled to host Iowa and travel to Texas for a pair of night kicks in the 2006 season, though.

10 Years Ago – 2011

Terrelle Pryor’s abrupt departure from the Ohio State program caused shock waves across the nation, but inside the team’s locker room the impact felt more like a mild tremor.

On June 7, the three-year starter at quarterback for the Buckeyes announced that he would not be returning for his senior season and would pursue the NFL’s supplemental draft.

The decision came as Pryor’s name was linked to a number of investigations into the program and the quarterback was already facing a five-game suspension to open the season.

“We lose many great players every year,” senior center Michael Brewster said. “It’s just another thing. We lost him a little earlier than we thought we were going to, but now it’s someone else’s turn to step up. At Ohio State, you’ve always got somebody ready to step up.”

Speaking at his introductory press conference June 13, head coach Luke Fickell said he had not spoken with the quarterback since the day of Tressel’s resignation.

“Everything happened kind of fast,” the coach said. “He tried to contact me and the situation didn’t work out (Fickell would reveal later that Pryor called him on June 7, when the new Buckeye head coach was at a Taylor Swift concert). When I do talk to him, I will encourage him, I will wish him well in his endeavors and continue to encourage him to get his degree.”

Five Years Ago – 2016

Although Urban Meyer was busy pursuing recruits, he was able to find the time to add a couple of assistants to his staff. Former Kentucky head coach Joker Phillips and former Indiana defensive coordinator Brian Knorr both joined the Buckeyes as quality control coaches.

The more notable of the pair was Phillips, who went 13-24 in three seasons with the Wildcats. He reached a bowl game in his first season coaching his alma mater in Lexington after a 6-6 regular season in 2010 but fell 27-10 to Pittsburgh in the BBVA Compass Bowl.

Following a 2-10 season in 2012, Phillips’ contract at Kentucky was not renewed, and he joined the University of Florida staff as a receivers coach and recruiting coordinator for the 2013 season. He was suspended in April 2014 for impermissible conduct with a recruit for meeting with a prospect during the recruiting dead period in January 2014 and resigned shortly after the punishment.

One Year Ago – 2020

Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith told BSB in a lengthy interview that he was still unsure of just about everything revolving around a potential 2020 football season, thanks to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

“I just don’t know yet,” Smith said. “As a conference, we’re continuing to have discussions. You just have to wait and see how the virus continues to be managed. We’ll hopefully have more clarity as we get through July.”

Although the Buckeyes were sailing through murky waters, Smith was proud of how head coach Ryan Day had handled the situation.

“He’s done well,” Smith said. “We were a little bit fortunate in this challenge because we were on spring break when this hit. We were basically telling people not to come back to campus. It was a little different than a lot of places. I think he’s handled it well. As you’ve seen, Ryan is a great communicator

Smith Proud Of Success Of OSU Athletes

Continued From Page 1

were presenting themselves. But one of the things that I wanted to make sure I was able to do was be in a position to possibly influence the direction of our industry of intercollegiate athletics, and I've had that opportunity most recently within NIL.

"There will be other things that I'm sure will emerge that I want to be able to do. I also want to continue to try and be a beacon, when I can, for our young athletic administrators of color and females. I hope to be a shining light that they can look toward if I do what I'm supposed to do, which I always strive to.

"There's a lot there to unpack, but I love it here and I love my president. President (Kristina) Johnson is really, really cool. She's really, really a good person to work for. I'm excited, and I've still got a lot of passion."

BSB: Speaking of President Johnson, you said how difficult that August period was, when there was so much uncertainty. How much did that time with President Johnson early in her tenure immediately help grow your relationship?

Smith: "That's a great pickup on your part – it was a major factor. I mean if we didn't have the pandemic and have the issues we were dealing with, I probably would not have had that daily conversation with her that allowed her and I to establish such a strong bond.

"It also allowed me to have an opportunity to see her leadership style up close and in the moment. And so, yes, good pickup. I was fortunate to have that ability to establish that relationship in an unfortunate circumstance, but to your point, it was extremely beneficial."

BSB: When you do look back at this football season, do you view it as success simply because you were able to get on the field through the pandemic?

Smith: "There are a couple of things, but yes, that's the highest of all the satisfactions. Looking at that and saying, 'Oh my God, we were able to do it,' and it was a collective. Ryan (Day) did a great job; Justin Fields did a good job; our parents association did a good job; and Jim Borchers, our doctor, did a great job. It was a collective push.

"So that was the biggest success, getting them on the field. But competitively, one of the things that was really important was to give this team a chance. It's hard to build a potential championship team, and I knew that we had a potential championship team as it related to the East Division and the Big Ten. I felt like we had a possible national champion, and we ended up in the title game with less games.

"The success of getting on the field was critical, but I would have to say also the performance was impressive. It was impressive, and I think it was the Michigan State game, we had 23 guys out. And even in the Big Ten Championship Game, we had a large number out (22 players). We still were able to overcome that and win, and so the resiliency of the players and their dedication to be successful was huge."

BSB: On the field, the big win for the season was taking down Clemson for the first time in program history. Just how satisfying was that win for you?

Smith: "Oh, it was extremely satisfying. I don't want to just dismiss the Big Ten championship, which was significant. To win it four years in a row, but yes, winning in the

semis against Clemson, a team that has been a nemesis for us – that was great.

"And really, just to see our kids perform the way they did, focused, it was outstanding. And to be down a couple of players, I was really proud."

BSB: On the other end, the Buckeyes fell short against Alabama. Do you think that there is any sort of gap between Ohio State and Alabama, and if so, what do you have to do to close that gap?

Smith: "I don't think there's a gap. I think that this past particular year, they were a better team. One day along the line, we'll face them again. But I don't think there's a gap. I think year to year, there's a gap sometimes with certain teams, but overall, our talent and our ability to execute, I think we're right on par with them.

"I don't try and evaluate teams, the way that question is posed. I look at every year and, hey, we got to the championship game. Whoever is at that level at that time, that's who I gauge us against."

BSB: How do you evaluate what Day has done through his first two full seasons as a head coach?

Smith: "Oh my goodness, phenomenal. People tend to forget about the personnel management side. He has a large group of people that he oversees, and he's managed his team exceptionally well – all the staff, coaches and support staff.

"And then he obviously has the athletes, and I think his ability to help this team get through what they got through last year is an indication of how well he's done from that personnel management point of view with the coaches, the staff and the players.

"Then he's just been exceptional as a coach.

"When you look, the job is to develop the players and put them in position to win. And he's done that, he's done that excellently. I'm just really, really proud of the great work he's done. He's just a joy to work with. He has a great personality, great demeanor, great style, and he's extremely bright. I just enjoy it. It's fun."

BSB: During the football season, you had three games that were canceled, only one of which was from COVID issues on your end. When you look back, how many games were you expecting there to be canceled or postponed? How did it go from your perspective as far as COVID cancellations?

Smith: "I just didn't know. I mean, I don't think anyone had a way to project, so each week you roll day to day. And I still, up to that Friday night, didn't think that we would have to cancel Illinois. And then we kept fighting to get to the Michigan State game, which we did.

"There was just no way to project, it was impossible. So we went into each day with the focus to get through each day, and that was our plan and we just kept working it."

BSB: You recently spoke at the Covelli Center on the name, image and likeness bill that was, at the time, entering the Ohio Senate. Why did you feel it important to speak with State Sen. Antani, and how important is this bill going to be for Ohio State and its student-athletes?

Smith: "I was hopeful that the NCAA rules would have passed by now. But they haven't, so it was important for our state to have a bill in place that allows our student-athletes to take advantage of NIL like many other states

across the country.

"Sen. Antani, who's a Buckeye, an Ohio State grad, he understood it. He knows a number of our former athletes. He stepped up strong. I was really glad that it passed through the Senate for all student-athletes in the state of Ohio. Certainly at Ohio State, but it's also about Kent State, it's about Miami of Ohio, it's about Toledo. It's about all those other student-athletes that will have a chance to take advantage of their NIL like other students in other states.

"From the time I chaired the NCAA committee in 2019, whenever that started, I began to truly embrace this concept, and I'm just so glad that Sen. Antani stepped up to put the bill in place and present it."

BSB: Looking at next year, I know you have said that you're hopeful there will be full capacity in Ohio Stadium. Is that still the hope, and what must happen for you to be able to make that decision in the near future?

Smith: "I think we should be there. I think it was the Columbus Clippers the other night, had 90 to 100 (percent capacity) in their stadium. And I know the Columbus Crew is planning their last home game (at Historic Crew Stadium) to be a sellout. I don't see any reason why we shouldn't.

"Obviously, we're in a good spot right now relative to the positivity rate. I'm concerned that our vaccinations are low compared to where we would like them to be. I'm hopeful that we could stay on an upward trajectory toward vaccinations. And hopefully, the COVID-19 variant that has hit our country and is hitting our state doesn't impact us. I don't see any reason why we wouldn't be at full capacity if we stay on this upward trajectory."

BSB: Recently, a College Football Playoff working group has recommended the expansion of the playoff to 12 teams, as well as having home games for the first round of the playoffs. What are your thoughts on both the potential for expansion and for home playoff games in Ohio Stadium?

Smith: "I think the group of four that studied this for two years did an excellent job looking at all the different permutations

and different models and then came up with a pretty exciting model. I think what we must do is now allow practitioners like myself and others to look at the great work they've done and try and, practically, see how it could work. Learn what we need to learn and what they learned in their process.

"It took them two years to get to that. We've just looked at it for the first time and actually haven't seen a lot of the details around it. So I'm curious to talk to my colleagues. I've talked to a few nationally, but as ADs and others, we have to get together. And it's hard now because we're in that time of year where people are taking vacations, particularly after COVID. But I'm looking forward to having conversations with my colleagues and learning more about the model, but I think the work they did was excellent.

"Playing at first-round sites is a perfect example. I want to talk about that more, look at that more. It sounds great. Fans always love that. But there is a reality that your first priority is a quality experience for your player.

"I think we have to look at when is that window of time that the game will be played? What's the historical climate? Do we truly, truly want to play in 32 degrees, in a cold rain or snow? Is that really right for the players? Or, if you're in the North, can you take that game to one of your domes in Indianapolis or Minneapolis or Ford Field (in Detroit)? I don't know.

"These are the questions that I have, along with a number of others. (The plan now is) just being curious and making sure that we do what's right for the players. It sounds good. It sounds like a great idea to play that at your own site, but I'm not so sure playing that game a little bit further north is a good idea. So we have to study that a little bit."

BSB: And then moving on to men's basketball, Ohio State had a successful campaign throughout the year, but it ended short with the big upset to Oral Roberts. What do you make of last year as a whole for that team?

Smith: "That team accomplished a lot. We were ranked in the top 10 for such a



FILE PHOTO

MAKING A DIFFERENCE – Gene Smith (right) spoke in favor of Ohio's name, image and likeness bill on May 24. After the bill, which was sponsored by State Sen. Niraj Antani (left), stalled in the Ohio House, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed an executive order to allow Ohio student-athletes to profit from their name, image and likeness rights.



FILE PHOTO

STILL IMPRESSING – Despite a disappointing first-round exit from the 2021 NCAA Tournament, Gene Smith said he is happy with what men’s basketball head coach Chris Holtmann (right) has done in his first four years with the team.

long time, even top five. They performed exceptionally well, beat some teams that moved further in the NCAA Tournament like UCLA, and had great, great rivalry games. They played well and I’m really, really proud of them.

“We were in the Big Ten title game at the tournament, were beat up, and then we had to turn around and play an outstanding Oral Roberts team without a key player. Kyle Young, people forgot he wasn’t there. E.J. Liddell was beat up, physically he was pounded and really trying to play through an amount of pain in that game. It was a tough challenge for us against a very hot Oral Roberts team who was very good.

“I was disappointed in that loss, but when you look at the body of work over the year objectively, they did a good job. Now it’s about going to the next level and seeing what we could do.”

BSB: What are your expectations for that team moving forward and how do you evaluate what Chris Holtmann has done through his first four years with this team?

Smith: “We always want to be in the hunt for a Big Ten championship and that catapults you, so we want to be in the hunt and periodically win. That’s always been our goal and that never changes.

“Chris is an outstanding teacher. If you just watch what our players do and the position that they are put in, they still have to execute. You and I could probably think back to some games where you see a play emerge and you’re like ‘Oh my goodness,’ and then we don’t close, we don’t execute.

“I think at the end of the day, he’s an exceptional teacher, a good in-game coach and he’s doing a great job of recruiting. The 2022 class has a chance to be significant. He’s done a great job, really proud of him, made a great, great hire recently (Tony Skinn) and so I think we’re in a good spot.”

BSB: The women’s basketball team had a strong year as well, but they couldn’t participate in postseason play because of the Patrick Klein investigation. What led to the decision to have a postseason ban, and is there any regret on that decision?

Smith: “Our compliance team looked at all the cases similar to ours – historically and the precedence and things of that nature. We felt we needed to levy that ban for all

three sports: women’s basketball, fencing and golf, because of the similar cases in the past and the decisions that the committee and the staff had made. We felt we needed to levy that.”

BSB: There have been many successful Olympic sports this season. Who are the coaches in those Olympic sports that are overlooked from people on the outside?

Smith: “When you look at Nadine Muzerall and what she’s done with women’s ice hockey, it’s just phenomenal. If you go back and look at our challenges that we’ve had with our women’s ice hockey program, she’s rebuilt it and revitalized it. Now we have great athletes, high academic achievers, and are just always in the hunt, which is the objective. Be in the hunt and have a chance to win it, which she’s done. I’m really proud of all the work she’s done.

“Karen Dennis, in women’s and men’s track, is constantly overlooked. She’s one of the best in the business, and we had our highest NCAA finish for our women’s track team ever (11th at the NCAA championships) and of course we won the women’s outdoor (Big Ten title) again.

“And then you have Jen Flynn Oldenburg, and I was just so glad she had a season in women’s volleyball. She came in, and then the whole season was moved to another time of year. We knew we had talent, and we knew she was a good teacher. No one could project the success that they ultimately had.

“Those young ladies, they’ve been putting their hearts out. And I go to a lot of practices. When you watch her teach, she’s an outstanding teacher. Our coaches are first and foremost teachers. Sometimes people forget that. She’s an outstanding teacher, and you can see it when they play that they bought into what she teaches. I’m really proud of her and what she’s done.”

BSB: With the Olympic sports, there have been some planned construction projects for things like the women’s ice hockey facility and a lacrosse stadium. How much were those plans impacted this past year because of COVID, and are there any updates involving any of those projects?

Smith: “It’s actually amazing, our donors have been exceptionally strong. They have been very helpful, and we’re getting close to finishing our campaign for the lacrosse stadium.

um. I think we’re about \$2 million away from our goal. We’re really excited about that.

“We’ll be recognizing a new \$5 million donor this fall who helped push us over the edge there, so we’ll hopefully take that project to the board in October and hopefully start construction next year. And then with women’s ice hockey, we haven’t finished the planning yet. We’re still finalizing those plans and hopefully somewhere toward the end of the year we’ll have a plan in place for that.”

BSB: Something else that has happened this past year was Urban Meyer leaving Ohio State’s athletic department to become the Jacksonville Jaguars’ head coach. Was that something that came as a surprise to you, and is his absence felt within the program now that he’s left?

Smith: “It really wasn’t a surprise because Urban and I talked on and off about his future. There was a time that colleges were coming after him, and he and I chatted a lot about that experience, and he would have no interest in going anywhere from a collegiate point of view.

“We also talked about the pros off and on and what it might be like, and he does such an excellent job of studying things. He studied the NFL and had learned about the salary cap, all that type of stuff. And this opportunity, which actually was unique, as he shared. It’s a total rebuild and he’s a builder, and so he really saw that it was a great opportunity for him to stay in the game and maybe accomplish something else.

“It made sense for him, and I’m happy for him. He’s missed because he did so much for us in a lot of other ways that people don’t think about. He was a really good partner to have and so I will miss him.”

BSB: Something that’s been big in all college sports is the increased size of the transfer portal. What are your thoughts on its current state and how it seems to be growing, and where do you think it will be in a few years with this type of growth?

Smith: “I think it will settle down. There’s going to be student-athletes who think they can land somewhere and they won’t be able to land at the place that they had aspirations to land. So over time, I think the culture will shift a little bit because people forget that all

of our other sports have had this for years. Soccer has been dealing with this for years.

“The most important thing for us is to make sure we create a culture in our program where one, we stay true to our promise and our commitment to the student-athlete and their family. We don’t waver from that. Two, we have open and honest communication with them about all the issues – academic performance, behavioral performance and competitive performance and be honest with them. Be totally transparent, and then, if the student-athlete chooses to leave because of playing time and they just can’t get into that position where they can gain the playing time, I don’t have a problem with that.

“But if you’re leaving for other reasons, then we need to go look in the mirror and look at what we did or didn’t do. That’s kind of how I always looked at transfers. For all of the other sports, it’s always been that way for me, and it’s that way for the sports that now have to deal with it for the first time.

“I think over time, though, the reality is there’s some student-athletes who already have deals made where they know where they’re going to transfer to. There’s a high percentage of that.

“But there are a lot that go into the portal that have no clue where they’re going and have aspirations to maybe go to certain places. And I think over time, as that data emerges and those experiences become more public, I think you’ll see it steady a little bit.”

BSB: After looking at everything you’ve done in the past year plus with COVID-19, is there anything you’d go back and do differently? Also, what is something that you are proud of from this athletic department through all the turmoil in this past year?

Smith: “I probably wouldn’t have said some things I said on Zoom calls last August when I had to go street on some situations. But you always regret when you’re not at your best, so I probably would go back and change some of the things I said in those conversations, be more respectful, but otherwise not a whole lot.

“I’m really proud of the resiliency that our players showed. Our athletes, coaches, staff, athletic trainers, oh my God. I’m just really pleased that we were able to allow our teams to compete and under crazy circumstances. I feel good about it.”



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Jerry Lucas A Winner On And Off The Court

By JEFF RAPP
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

When you get to interview or chat up Jerry Lucas, you are fully aware you're conversing with the GOAT of Ohio basketball and there is no need to preface a question with, "Do you remember ... ?" He does. Former BSB staffer and longtime Ohio State basketball writer Jeff Rapp enjoyed that privilege in an hourlong phone interview on June 24, which is depicted below.

Still "Dr. Memory," healthy and razor-sharp at 81 – Lucas can spell words alphabetically faster than most humans can traditionally – the Middletown, Ohio, product has returned to southern Ohio and now resides in Gallipolis, where he remains deeply involved with devising unique educational programs. A charter member of the Ohio Basketball Hall of Fame and the only three-time Player of the Year in the Big Ten, Lucas joined a stellar 1980 class of the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass., and was inducted into the College Basketball Hall of Fame in 2006. Our interview features regimentation, regret, refocus and reinvention (both of the game and the world of education) and rebounds – lots and lots of rebounds.

BSB: So I guess that would be one question our readers would be interested in is what brought you back to Ohio and specifically that area?

Lucas: "Well, I've been in Ohio for several years, but I moved to Gallipolis when COVID started. I was in a situation that wasn't good. I have some very good friends here, and they have a place to let me stay in. I lived in California for a long time, but I've been in Ohio quite some time."

BSB: So you're somewhat near your roots there. Did you live in Middletown your whole upbringing?

Lucas: "Yeah, I was born and raised there and lived there until I went to Ohio State."

BSB: Was it just the one loss in high school? I hate to bring up the most painful part.

Lucas: "That's no problem. You win some and you lose some."

BSB: Not many in your case.

Lucas: "I won, like, 120 or 130 games in a row before I lost my first one, and that was the last game of my senior year, the semifinals of the state championship."

BSB: My goodness. And some of the environments for these games had to

be off the charts, too. Legendary, really, when you think about high school basketball in Ohio.

Lucas: "They really were. Our main rival was Hamilton Big Blue, and there was so much interest in that game that in my three years in high school I never played a game against Hamilton in their gym nor, of course, did they play a game against us in our gym because those games were always moved to the Cincinnati Gardens, and we drew upwards of 15,000 people for some of those games. So the interest was phenomenal. At that time, I think that was an all-time record for attendance for a high school game (in Ohio), especially a regular-season high school game."

BSB: And then there are people who still talk about the Columbus North upset, and I imagine that was a packed house as well. That was at John Arena, correct?

Lucas: "Yeah, that was St. John Arena, and, of course, when we played in the state tournament, it was always a packed house."

My sophomore year, it was up in Cleveland with the first game against Cleveland East Tech and then Canton McKinley in the finals. They were all packed out. There was great interest in our team, and the following was phenomenal."

BSB: You were known for being ... I don't know if stoic is the word, but you were, obviously, a cerebral player and always thinking through the game, and didn't put a lot of energy into being emotional during games. How did you control that in those kinds of environments?

Lucas: "It was easy for me. That was just my makeup. That was what I was and what I was like. I never expressed much emotion playing basketball. I just did my job and did what I was supposed to do. I was even called the 'Icy Block' by John Havlicek after we were in college. (laughs)"

BSB: I've not heard that one before. That's good.

Lucas: "Of course, being part of a team was the uppermost thing in my mind. You play as a team, you win as a team and you can't do it as an individual. My teammates were always important to me, and that aspect was primary for me as a basketball player."

BSB: Your recruitment also was something that people had not seen before. I've read there were, what, as many as 150 schools that were chasing you?

Lucas: "There may have been more than that that sent letters that I never read. I suppose you know I refused to be recruited. I didn't want anything to do with it. I didn't

want to be bothered. I wanted to live as normal a life as I could, as a young teenager, and got the word out through my parents, our principal, our coach and a sportswriter, Jerry Nardiello of the Middletown Journal, that if anybody tried to contact me, I'd never attend that school. I just wanted to be left alone."

"And there was only one person who defied that. I was in English class the middle of my senior year and there was a knock on the door and the English teacher went to the door and came back to my desk and said, 'Jerry, Adolph Rupp is out there and he wants to talk to you.' So I told her, 'Go out and tell him to leave. I don't want to talk to him.' I said, 'I'm sure he knows the rules; you know the rules.' But she said, 'I'm from Kentucky and a lot of people in this town are from Kentucky. Please talk to him.'"

"So I went out and said hello. His assistant Harry Lancaster was with him. And I said, 'Gentlemen, I don't need to ask how you got in here, that's obvious to me, but you know what the rules are and you've broken the rules. I'm a student, you've taken me out of class and I'm going back into class, and you'll never have to make the trip again. Because we're doing this: I will never, ever think of attending the University of Kentucky.'"

BSB: You said that to Coach Rupp's face?

Lucas: "I said it right to his face. He had a peculiar look on his face, but I just excused myself and went right back into class. Of course, everybody in class heard what I said, so it was quite a reaction when I got back in my class."

BSB: Wow.

Lucas: "Because I meant what I said. I mean it was important to me that I wanted to not be bothered and I didn't want to be held on some pedestal. I just wanted to live a normal life. After that hit the newspapers, I wasn't bothered anymore."

BSB: So, I know you've detailed this many times, but I'm wondering how did it come to be with Ohio State? How did that work out?

Lucas: "After my senior year was over, obviously, I needed to make a decision. I wanted to stay close to home so my friends and family could see me play. I had inquired and asked some questions. As a matter of fact, I took one trip up to Ohio State. And that was the only trip I took anyplace. I didn't go to any other school. I didn't visit any other school."

"After talking to Coach (Fred) Taylor and some other people up there, I realized that that's where I wanted to go, and it was that simple and that easy. It wasn't a complicated thing."

BSB: You've talked about how you really suppressed this recruiting nonsense. And now, you can't go on a sports website without seeing full-blown stories about recruits and they've got their own social media following. You've got to snicker or something about that now, I would imagine.

Lucas: "That's totally the antithesis of what I did. Of course, things are totally different today with all the social media and everything that's happening. I'm not on social media now, and I certainly wouldn't have been on social media then because I couldn't even afford a phone, so that would've never happened. Even if I had one, it never would've happened. I read about all the problems some players had and the difficulties they had. I just didn't want to be

part of that.

"As I grew up, I didn't know what was happening one street over much less today when if you pick up your phone, you can find out everything that's happening in the entire world. There just wasn't the kind of communication then as there is today. As a matter of fact, when I grew up, I was becoming a really, really good basketball player but nobody knew it. I practiced on my own, mostly, 12 to 15 hours a day."

"When I was young, I tried to play with older players as I got a little better, etc. But nobody came to our games then. I mean, even in junior high school we played at 3:30 on a Sunday afternoon and there was no attendance. Both my parents worked, other parents worked. It was the team, the coaches, the managers and maybe three or four people in the stands. There were articles in the newspaper about me scoring a lot of points, but nobody really knew if I was good or not because nobody saw me. There's no way that could happen today."

BSB: Oh, no. Now the 700th-ranked kid in the country has 48 videos on YouTube.

Lucas: "That's right. But when I grew up, that's what happened. Not only did people around the country not know I was good basketball player, people in my hometown didn't know how good of a basketball player I was."

"Middletown had 15 years of the most incredible basketball success in the history of the state of Ohio, by far. From '44 to '59, the success was phenomenal: seven state championships, probably should have won three others, an .880 winning percentage. It was tremendous. I mean it was just an incredible, incredible time, and basketball was the DNA of our community."

"We had two established players that as they traveled around, they would invite teams that they played against to come to Middletown to play the summer league team. And so an informal league started. The coaches couldn't be involved with it. That was absolutely taboo in those days. Our coach couldn't even come to watch us play in the summer at Sunset Park where we played all the time. So Owen Lawson and Eric Back were the two players that created this. (Players from) Dayton, the University of Cincinnati, Eastern and Western Michigan, etc., would come in and play, so there was great interest in those games."

"Ninth-graders were not in high school during those years, so I couldn't play for the high school team. But after that, many of my friends said, 'You've got to try out for the summer team.' I finally agreed to it and I went to Owen and Eric. I'd never met them before. So I went to Sunset Park and said, 'If possible, I'd like to try out for the summer team,' and right away Eric Back said, 'There's no way we can have a junior high kid play on our team.' The first game was going to be against University of Dayton, which had just finished second in the NIT. They lost by one point – and the NIT was more important than NCAA (Tournament) then."

"I think they were 25-3 or something like that that year, and their star player, Johnny Horan, was an All-American and the sixth pick in the NBA draft, and I would have to play against him. Eric said, 'There's no way. It's impossible. You can't do it.' So Owen Lawson said, 'Well, how do we know he can't play, Eric? Let's let him play with this and see what happens.' Well, it didn't take long for them to realize that I could really play."



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FILE PHOTO

EARLY STAR – Legendary basketball player Jerry Lucas found success as soon as he was allowed to suit up for the varsity Buckeyes in his sophomore season.

“So word started spreading around town through Armco Steel and all the restaurants and in the stores that this kid, Lucas, was going to play against Johnny Horan. The game started at 8 o’clock, and by 7:30 there were literally thousands of people at the park.”

BSB: And you’re, what, a 15-year-old kid at this point?

Lucas: “I’m a 15-year-old kid at this point.”

BSB: How big were you then?

Lucas: “I was 6-8 when I was 14 and never grew (taller) from that point.

“To make a long story short, I totally outplayed Johnny Horan. He came over to Owen Lawson and said, ‘Man, what grade is that kid in?’ And Owen said, ‘Well, he’ll be a sophomore.’

“‘Only a sophomore?! What college does he go to?!’

“And he said, ‘Johnny, that kid is a junior high school player.’ Johnny Horan fell to his knees and said, ‘I can’t believe that.’

“People in town realized that I could really play, and so there was incredible anticipation for that coming basketball season. There was a veteran team returning and with my addition to it, there was incredible excitement. So I wrote a book about that year, and part of it is about that team. It’s called ‘Middie Magic and Mind Magic.’ People who have read it have really loved it.

“I grew up with some of the funniest people who ever lived. There are some hilarious stories in there as well as what it was like in

that community. It’s kind of a cross between ‘Hoosiers’ and ‘Remember The Titans.’”

BSB: Speaking of your freshman year, when you’re at Ohio State and as a freshman, obviously you’re aware that you have to sit out. There was no mystery there. What was that year like? You had to have known that you guys had a really good team brewing.

Lucas: “We had a freshman team. We played the varsity every day in practice, and we beat them every day, too, but the only games we could play were against our junior varsity before our home games. We couldn’t play any other games, any other teams, anything. So St. John Arena would be full when our freshmen played the JV. Unfortunately, several thousand people would leave after, which was terrible. There was that much interest in our freshmen group.”

BSB: I’ve talked to a lot of the guys over the years, and I’ve talked to Coach Taylor. So many testimonials for that man. Why was he the right person at the right time for the right group of kids, do you think?

Lucas: “He was a great person. He was very likable, he was very knowledgeable about the game. He understood the game and he understood people. He knew how to handle people. Everybody’s different, obviously. With that many players, you’re going to have that many different personalities, and if you can’t handle different personalities and different people, you’re not going to be suc-

cessful. But he knew how to do that.”

BSB: I don’t know if you’re the type who likes to go down memory lane about particular moments or games, but I’m wondering if there’s maybe just a regular-season game or a locker-room moment or even sometimes some guys have strong memories about just being with the other guys away from things. Do any stick out? I know your memory is vast, so I’m asking a really loaded question there.

Lucas: “Just that it was a fantastic group of young men, and they were all intelligent, they were all friendly, they were all good players, obviously, and we began to develop very deep friendships that have lasted throughout our lifetimes. And we were all from Ohio. And most of us were from smaller towns in Ohio. A few were from Columbus – Dick Furry and Joe Roberts and Mel Nowell and Dave Barker, but most of us were from smaller communities in Ohio and had a lot in common. I’m very proud to have those people as my friends today.”

BSB: So your sophomore year is the dream year. It meets all of the anticipation. You guys win the national team championship. You make the Olympic team ...

Lucas: “That was a phenomenal year. It was crazy all the things that happened. I don’t need to name all the things, but it was a very unique time. In basketball history, I was the first college player to ever be named

Sportsman of the Year by Sports Illustrated and on and on and on. But the two most important things that happened were A) we won the national championship and B) we won a gold medal. Notice I always say ‘we’ won a championship and ‘we’ won a gold medal. I didn’t do it. That’s part of being a group, a team that’s successful and for the right reasons and because everybody understands the purpose.

“It’s no fun to play on a team where one or two people don’t understand that. It’s just not an enjoyable situation.”

BSB: Then jumping to the next year, when you lose a national title in an overtime game (vs. Cincinnati), I just don’t know how you get over that or there isn’t an immediate ...

Lucas: “I haven’t gotten over it to this day. (laughs)”

BSB: Sorry.

Lucas: “Oh, no. That’s part of sports. I mean, if we would have played them in 10 games, we would have probably beaten them nine times, but that’s the great thing about sports. You never know what might happen on a given occasion. And that was one of those nights and given occasions when really the better team didn’t win. You look at the talent and where it went and what it did after that. You’ve got two 50 greatest players in NBA history, five players from our team went on to play in the NBA. It’s just one of the things that happens in sports.”

BSB: Yeah, it doesn’t compute, but you’re right. It still happens. So when a game literally goes down to a play, is there a particular play that’s especially haunting.

Lucas: “No. Not really. Because you could go crazy doing that. You could go back to a play that happened in the first minute and say, ‘Wow. If we had scored that or they had a miss ...’ So, no. I don’t do that kind of stuff.

“Also, I didn’t take the games away from there with me very much. There were other things I was interested in, other things I wanted to do. I wasn’t one that took every game and deconstructed it and talked about it. Now Bobby Knight did, because he wanted to be a great coach, but I wasn’t a person that did that.”

BSB: That is mind magic because I’m sure I would have mentally tortured myself after something like that. (both laugh)

Lucas: “But understand I was very sad and very unhappy about what happened, obviously. And as I said earlier, it still haunts all of us.”

BSB: I mentioned St. John Arena. You had that painful loss in the state tournament your senior year and then lost what, how many times in that building after that?

Lucas: “None. We never lost a game in Columbus in St. John Arena. All the losses we had were away.”

BSB: Amazing. And then your senior year, again skipping all the way to the end of the year, how injured were you when you played in that title game in the rematch with UC?

Lucas: “More injured than anybody realized.”

BSB: You want to expound on that?

Lucas: “Well, I hurt my knee very badly, and I was taped from my ankle to my crotch. And I kind of had to drag my leg around. I suppose maybe it might’ve been best if I didn’t play and Gary Bradds played in my place. I don’t know. But I wanted to play, obviously, and I did. But I really was curtailed in what I could do and was able to.”

Continued On Page 12

Lucas Almost Played In Pros For Steinbrenner

Continued From Page 11

BSB: I need your help on your venture into professional basketball because I think it's hard for people who aren't familiar with that era to understand how different the landscape was then. You had an NBA that wasn't doing very well, the ABL was in existence and then the Cleveland Pipers came into play. Plus, the (Cincinnati) Royals had territorial rights to you, which also was weird.

Lucas: "Yeah, I was drafted when I was in high school because there was a rule then – I don't know what the radius was, 50, 70 miles – that a team could draft a player in high school if they felt he was good enough to maybe make it when his college class graduated, but that was an incredible gamble. Wilt (Chamberlain) was drafted that way, and I was drafted that way. I don't know if others were or not.

"So the Royals had my rights and they offered me \$30,000 a year for three years, not \$45 million like I would make today. Meanwhile, George Steinbrenner owned the Cleveland Pipers of the ABL which was founded by Abe Saperstein, who was owner of the Trotters, and he offered me \$40,000, so I signed the contract with him. But the league folded and disbanded, and I never got a penny from George Steinbrenner, not one nickel. I kidded him about it through the years when we did a banquet or something else, and we'd laugh about it.

"But, anyway, two men in Cleveland – Howard Marks and Carl Glickman were their names – they came to me and offered me a personal services contract. They wanted to use my contract to try to obtain an NBA franchise in Cleveland. And so I agreed to do that and they paid me the \$40,000 that George Steinbrenner was going to pay. They met with the board of governors of the NBA several times and got approval for an NBA franchise in Cleveland that would start in 1963, and upon my retirement, I would have owned 25 percent of the team. A lot of people didn't know that.

"The cost was only \$200,000 for the franchise. And they went to the final board of governors meeting where everything was going to be signed and approved, and they raised the price to \$250,000. They turned them down. So the NBA did not have a franchise in Cleveland until much later. I remained very close to Howard Marks the rest of my life.

"So after that, I signed with the Royals for \$30,000 a year. (laughs)"

BSB: Speaking of your pro career, I'm still trying to wrap my head around the fact that you had seasons and postseasons where you averaged 20

rebounds a game. You were a great study of the way the ball caromed and, obviously, you had the talent and the timing and the knowledge to be a very good rebounder, but that's still a phenomenal number. I think you were 17.2 (a game) for your career at Ohio State, just going off memory there. Can you explain that?

Lucas: "I wanted to get every rebound. That was the uppermost thought in my mind every game, more so than scoring. I wanted to get every rebound I possibly could. That was very, very important to me. It was very important to our team. I began studying as a very young boy. I would miss shots on purpose eight hours in a row at certain points on the rim to see where the ball would bounce and why it would bounce, different arcs, etc., etc., etc. So I developed kind of a mental software, and when somebody shot the ball, I knew where it was going. I could tell when it left their hand where it was going.

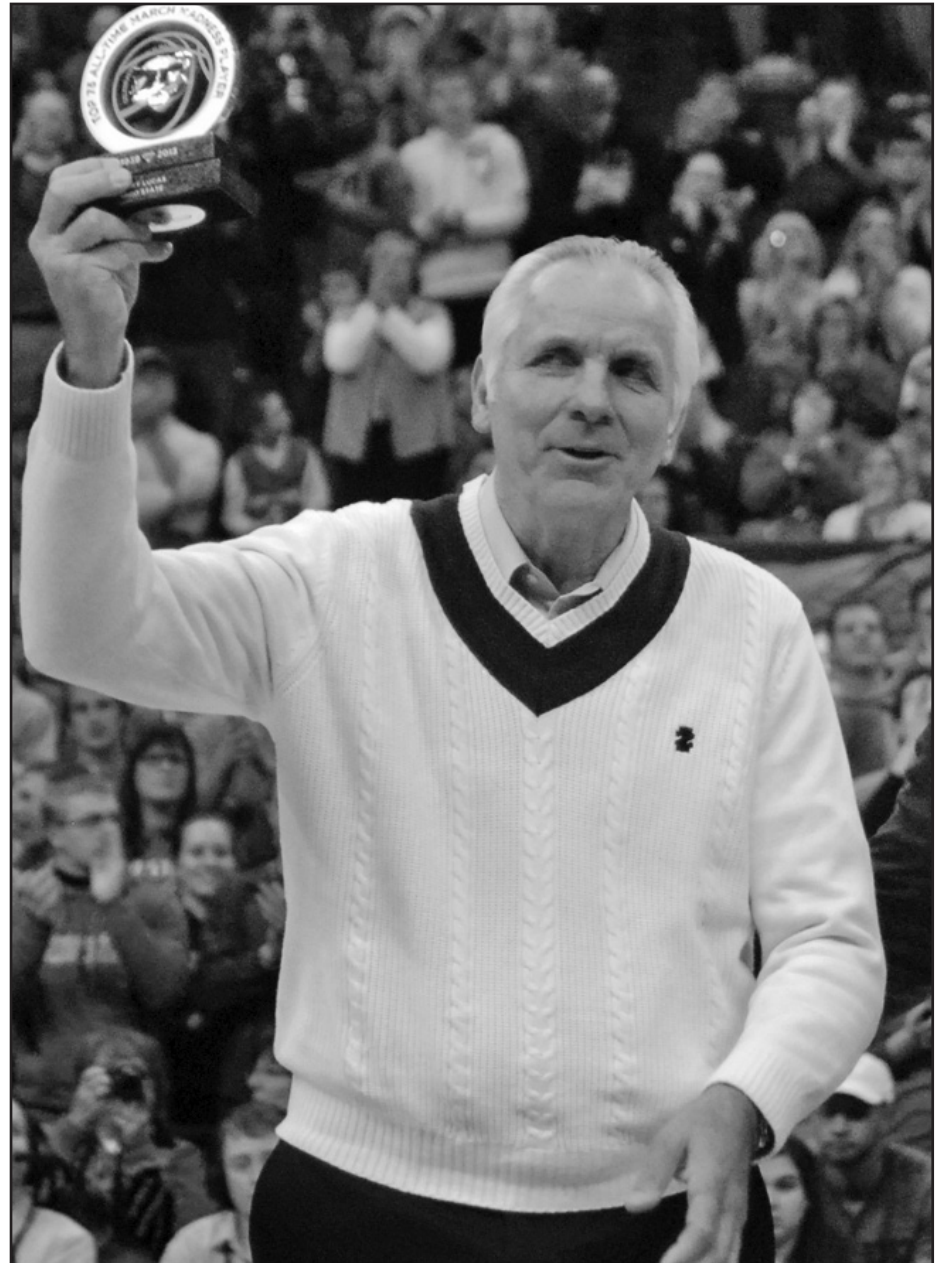
"There aren't a lot of great shooters, so there are a lot of missed shots. I never blocked out; it was waste of time. Every day in practice we would practice blocking out, blocking out. So after a couple of weeks, I told Coach Taylor, 'I'm going to do everything you tell me to do in practice. I'm a consummate team player, and I'm absolutely going to do that. But after the game starts, I'm never go block out.'

"Blocking out is a waste of time. You're not in an aggressive position, you're not in an athletic position. Your feet are flat on the floor, you're pushing backwards. That's no way to rebound. I said, 'I know where it's going, I'm going to go get it.' He said, 'Well, if you can do that, do it.'"

BSB: Is it true that you had NBA coaches who were reluctant to play you at the five (position) because they were afraid you were going to get overpowered in there? Again, I find that comical because you'd average like 18 rebounds a game playing your way.

Lucas: "It was my opinion that I should have always played the center position in the NBA. Finally, when I was traded to the Knicks (in 1971), I played the center position and I loved it. And it helped our team. I was the first big guy to ever go away from the basket and shoot. In 1972, when we were playing for the world championship against the Los Angeles Lakers – and they won 33 games in a row that year, which is still an all-time record – Willis Reed was out. He couldn't play in the series. So I was the starting center against Wilt Chamberlain. They were heavily favored.

"But I took Wilt away, and he didn't know what to do. He was dumbfounded. Nobody had ever done that before to him. And I could shoot a very high percentage out there. I shot 66 percent my entire college



FILE PHOTO

HONORED – Jerry Lucas has earned plenty of plaudits over the years for his play, including receiving an NCAA Tournament Top 75 Player trophy during the Buckeyes' game against Minnesota on Feb. 20, 2013.

career from the field, and I led the NBA in field-goal percentage one year as well, so I could shoot from out there. We got a quick, big lead, and Jerry West starts screaming at Wilt, 'Get out there!'

"If they left me alone, I had a good shot. If they ran at me, I had a layup or I'd pass to (Dave) DeBusschere or (Bill) Bradley and swish, swish. They could not compete with us with that personnel on the floor. The only way they could was to take Wilt out of the game, and they weren't going to do that. And, unfortunately, DeBusschere got hurt at the end of the third quarter and couldn't play in the series anymore. And we had to bring Phil Jackson in to take his place and, unfortunately, Phil couldn't throw the ball in the ocean from the beach. He couldn't shoot a lick, and they beat us four in a row.

"Roy Firestone interviewed Wilt a few years after he retired and asked him who is the toughest guy he ever had to play against, and he said, 'You're expecting me probably to say Bill Russell, but it's not even close. It was Jerry Lucas.' He said, 'I had no idea what to do. He drove me crazy.' Now, all the big guys play out there. It's funny because I had some not-so-gentle remarks thrown at me from the centers around the league."

BSB: What are your feelings about

the way the game has evolved? Do you like it?

Lucas: "No I don't."

BSB: Why is that?

Lucas: "It's either a dunk or a three-point shot. Somebody did an analysis of all the shots taken over the NBA season and it was remarkable. Basically, it was a dunk or a three-point shot. Now there are some intermediate shots, but not very many.

"I don't watch the NBA very much. I watch some of the playoffs but teams will take 40 three-pointers now, and that's the way the game is played. There are very few players who have the deft touch to shoot a 12-footer or 10-footer. And there were more plays run. These guards today, they dominate the ball.

"Well, I played with a guard who dominated the ball, too, and it was Oscar Robertson, but he involved everyone."

BSB: Speaking of Oscar, you also were blessed throughout your basketball career to play with other outstanding players at every level.

Lucas: "Sure was."

BSB: Which is why you are the first player ever to win a championship in high school, college, the Olympics and the NBA.

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Lucas: "I really was around great people at every level. One of our starting forwards, who didn't score that much in high school, led the MAC in scoring for three years. One of our guards went to North Carolina State and broke every scoring record they had, until he burned the dorm down. He was crazy, man. Obviously, in college, all five of us played in the NBA. On the Knicks, there were six Hall of Famers on that team. So I played with great players my whole career."

BSB: And you made the Hall of Fame in 1980.

Lucas: "Technically, it was '79, but it was listed as '80."

BSB: And you went in with your Olympic buddies.

Lucas: "Oscar Robertson and Jerry West."

BSB: What did that mean to you, to be inducted with those guys?

Lucas: "It was fantastic. Oscar was my teammate for six years. I played with both of them in the Olympics, and they are two of the greatest guards to ever play in the history of the game. So it was a real honor to be part of that class."

BSB: And years later, your alma mater officially retires your famous No. 11 and hangs it in the rafters. What was that night like?

Lucas: "It was a real honor. Mine was the first basketball number to be retired, which is very special. My whole family was there – my wife, my parents, my brother, his wife, some other relatives, some of my teammates were there. It was just a tremendous honor. You can't get a higher honor than that, as far as I'm concerned, at a university or college. It was terrific and very humbling."

BSB: How often do you think about your Ohio State teammates and Coach

Taylor?

Lucas: "Oh, probably every day."

BSB: And now some of them aren't with us anymore. How have you handled that?

Lucas: "Well, it hasn't been easy. Losing a dear friend is very difficult. But I text maybe 200 people every Saturday morning. I text former teammates, all of them. I text the wives of those who have gone. And we talk on the phone. As a matter of fact, Bobby called me last week and we had a real nice conversation. So I try to stay in touch. It's important."

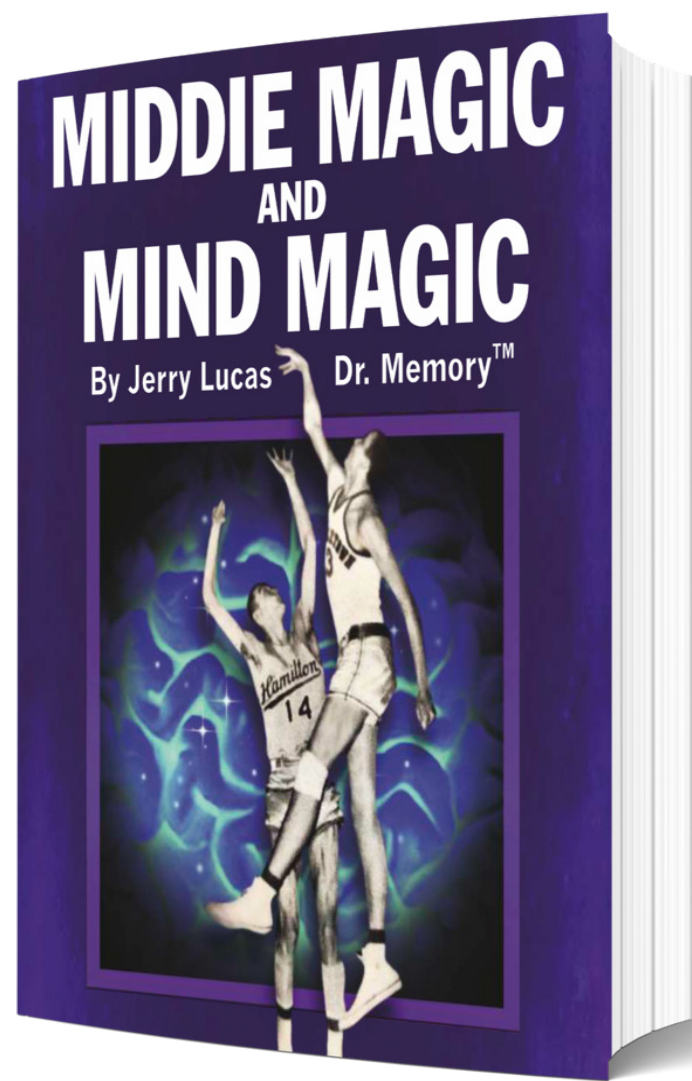
BSB: What does your legacy mean to you?

Lucas: "I don't really know. It's important. I don't dwell on it. It's not the most important thing in my life. Education is the most important thing in my life, and my true legacy, I hope, is going to be what I've done for education."

BSB: Do you believe mind power is still an underrated facet of athletics? I know that's a big, wide question. I realize you can overthink in sports, but ...

Lucas: "The famous statement that Fred used to say to us is, 'Thinking hurts the ball-club.' You've just got to do. But you've got to think before that and know what you need to do. You better use that to develop the right techniques, the right procedures, the right strategies and everything else. I tried to shoot 5,000 shots every day, and every shot had a purpose. If you're shooting a shot without a purpose, you're wasting your time. So my mind was totally involved in everything I was doing as an athlete."

(You can find more information on Lucas' new book, "Middie Magic and Mind Magic," by going to middiemagic.com.)



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Keels Eager For Return Of Road Games, Fans

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Paul Keels is the voice of the Buckeyes, having done radio and basketball games at Ohio State since 1998.

Whether it's an autumn afternoon or a winter's night, his recognizable deep tones have narrated the highs and lows for both programs while calling what he sees without the hysterics of "rooting for the home team."

The Cincinnati native and graduate of Moeller High School and Xavier University grew up in the 1970s when radio was still king and broadcasters became legendary figures in their towns. He began his career as a news anchor/reporter for Cincinnati powerhouse AM station WLW in 1979 and made many career moves along the way before assuming the OSU mantle.

It may shock some to know that this broadcaster of Ohio State games called basketball and football for the Michigan Wolverines from 1981-87. Among other teams he announced were the Detroit Pistons, the Cincinnati Bearcats and preseason games for the Cincinnati Bengals.

In an interview with BSB on June 24, he discussed dealing with Buckeye coaches and gave a surprising answer for one of his best non-Ohio State interviewees and favorite road venues.

But first, he updated the plans for this fall's broadcasts after last season's away football and basketball games were called in-studio because of travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BSB: After doing road games remotely in 2020, what are the broadcast plans for football this fall?

Keels: "As far as we know now, we have every indication we'll be able to operate as normal, doing home games in the stadium – we did three home games – like last year and the anticipation is we'll do the away games on-site."

BSB: Can you envision what it will be like to go to Minnesota for that first game on Sept. 2 and have fans in the stadium?

Keels: "Fortunately, it hasn't been that long that we knew what it was like to have fans in the stands. It will be a nice change after last year with, really, only the three home games. Only two of them had people in the building with family members in the stands."

"I have envisioned it and I look forward to it."

BSB: What were the difficulties in doing games remotely off monitors?

Keels: "It was very challenging. We understood why we had to do it that way. It was a company decision for health and safety and everybody understood. A lot of announcers at a lot of colleges, not all of them, had to do it the same way."

"You were held hostage by the video feed you got. Some were better than others. It was very challenging, and sometimes you had to psych yourself up to feel like you were back at a game because you weren't at the game."

BSB: How tough was it to generate that enthusiasm, even when you were in Ohio Stadium with only a few families and friends?

Keels: "You had to focus on the players you're currently watching. Fortunately, at a lot

of places they had piped in some crowd noise, so you had a little bit of that as well."

"You just had to focus on what was going on. Especially with basketball, they had that stretch of three or four wins in a row on the road against ranked teams."

BSB: Any preparation for what you did? Had you done monitor games before?

Keels: "Never, never, and hope never to have to do it again."

"The first one I did was the football game at Penn State, and I was as nervous as I'd been for any game I'd ever done. You couldn't watch players warming up. You couldn't see, often-times, subs coming in, what running backs, receivers they were changing."

"Formations are tough, and for football, yard lines. Was it the Ohio State 40? Was it the other team's 40?"

"We also had some instances where the video froze on us as plays were going on. The interception Haskell

Garrett had in the end zone at Michigan State we didn't know what happened. There were some other instances where that happened as well, but again, we understood why we had to do it but it was very much a challenge."

BSB: Favorite moments as a broadcaster?

Keels: "There's a lot of them. I guess with football you'd have to say the two national championships with victories over Miami and Oregon."

"Seeing basketball getting to the Final Fours and in 2007 getting to the national championship game even though they lost."

"One most people wouldn't recognize but in 2016 I had to fill in and do Ohio State baseball games and broadcast games in Omaha when the Buckeyes came through the consolation bracket and won the Big Ten baseball tournament to earn an NCAA tournament bid. That stretch of games there were a bunch of rainouts and postponements. On championship Sunday they had to play two games in one day, so those are probably some of the favorite ones off the top of my head."

BSB: Back to the Miami game, go through the chaos with the late flag call. What did you see that was going on? (The Hurricanes thought they won in overtime with a defensive stop before a penalty in the end zone on fourth down kept the Buckeyes alive. They tied it at 24 and won it 31-24 in double overtime to win the 2002 national title.)

Keels: "There was no question (the flag) was late, very late. We thought the game was over. We were starting to say, 'Ohio State's dream season comes to an end' or something like that, and then all sudden before I can say anything Jim (Lachey, game analyst) spotted the flag and he started yelling, maybe about 10 times, 'There's a flag, there's a flag,' and we just got the Miami players on the field celebrating. I think one of the players for Miami started celebrating, and when they had to go back on the field, he couldn't go on because his helmet broke because he threw it in the air."

"It was really kind of a swing of emotions from thinking the season's over to all of a sudden they're still alive to have a chance to play for a title."

BSB: One of the unsung plays earlier in the game was Maurice Clarett strip-

ping the ball and recovering it after Craig Krenzel threw a pick to Sean Taylor, who returned it 28 yards before turning it over. The play enabled the Buckeyes to regain possession and kick a field goal for a 17-7 lead. How did you handle that?

Keels: "It was hard for us to pick it out at first. Sun Devil Stadium is one of the highest press boxes that we've ever been in, comparable to Ohio State's press box."

"At first it was really difficult to see for us, and then all of a sudden you see Maurice come away with a football and the official blowing Ohio State's way. You know, for all the great plays Maurice made running the football and scoring touchdowns, that might have been maybe one of the biggest plays that he ever made in his one year playing at Ohio State."

BSB: How do you explain the connections you have not only with Lachey but your basketball analyst Ron Stokes?

Keels: "It's interesting because my first year was the second year for each of those guys. Their first seasons were the year before I got there, and for me just going into my 24th year, the fact that we haven't had to change partners is really great because you kind of get to know how one another thinks. You know what they're looking for. They know what I'm watching for, and I try to be as concise as I can to give them as much time to talk."

"Maybe the best thing about it is not just working with them and knowing just what kind of analysts they are but getting to know them as people, getting to know their families, their spouses, their kids. That really has been fantastic."

BSB: Ron has told the story of you two early in the partnership being in Puerto Rico for a tournament when you ended up in a rough area of San Juan by mistake. Let's hear your side of the story.

Keels: "It was my first year doing the games, and we were driving back from the arena to our hotel, which is about a half hour or 45-minute drive. We ended up getting lost in one of the worst parts of San Juan. We're driving down a dead-end street, and there's sirens. The police are driving around with sirens, not because there was anything happening but just because it was a dangerous area and they wanted just to have a police presence."

"We get to the end of the dead-end street. I'm driving and trying to turn the car around, and Ronnie's trying to read a map and turned the dome light on, and I just immediately said, 'Ronnie, turn the light off. We don't want people to know we're lost.'"

"Yes, we made it out."

BSB: Growing up in Cincinnati, who were some of your play-by-play influences?

Keels: "It was really amazing. Jim McIntyre and Joe Nuxhall were the first ones I remember listening to doing the Reds games. Then you had Dom Valentino doing the Royals (NBA). Phil Samp did the Bengals for so long."

"We heard Marv Homan, God rest his soul, do the Ohio State games. Those were the games broadcast to Cincinnati but also listening to guys who did UC and Xavier and you even heard some of the Kentucky and Louisville games, but it was mostly listening to pro games."

"As a very young kid I had a chance to meet Jim McIntyre at Crosley Field. When I would go to Royals games at the (Cincinnati)

Gardens, my buddies and I would go up to Dom Valentino and get his autograph, and very early in my career I had a chance to work with Phil Samp, so it was really neat to listen to those guys and have some similar brushes with some of them."

BSB: Being from the Midwest, there were a lot of 50,000-watt AM stations that could be heard from all parts. What was that like picking up games on your radio?

Keels: "Most of that occurred when I was in my 20s and especially if I was driving someplace being able to listen, whether it was games out of St. Louis or games out of Detroit, Minnesota, Pittsburgh with KDKA."

"When you're on the road for hours, that was one of the things early on in my career that I was starting to become aware that it was really easy just to be able to hear different games, different announcers, just become more familiar with different teams, other than the hometown teams."

BSB: You have the uniqueness of broadcasting for Michigan and Ohio State. What kind of perspective does that give you on the rivalry?

Keels: "From working in Detroit, the biggest thing was it was when Bo Schembechler was coaching. At his weekly press conferences, he talked about his time playing at Miami (University), coaching in Miami. He talked a lot about what it was like playing for Woody, being an assistant to Woody at Ohio."

"You learned he had a great respect for the Michigan-Ohio State rivalry, and the Michigan players I worked with – Dennis Franklin and Rick Leach and John Wangler – those guys all got to know Ohio State players post-college. Just hearing their perspective on it was really a great education."

"My last Ohio State-Michigan game in Detroit was 1986. That would have been (Jim) Harbaugh's senior year in Columbus after he made that guarantee they were going to win (Michigan won 26-24). He made that guarantee the same day his father got fired as head coach at Western Michigan."

"The other big difference at that time was it wasn't just one station that broadcast the Ohio State games. There were five stations that did football and three did basketball, so your broadcast wasn't identified as the sole radio property."

BSB: What have been the takeaways from working with the five football coaches at Ohio State during your tenure (John Cooper, Jim Tressel, Luke Fickell, Urban Meyer and Ryan Day)?

Keels: "As most of the media people in Columbus knew, Coop was just wonderful. I guess my first three years would have been his last three years."

"Practice was open to the media so I could come to practice. He was available pretty much anytime. If you wanted, you could spend time in his office with him and it continued to be that. It was a great introduction for me."

"It was quite a change with Tress because it was very different and it was a little more regimented. He closed a lot of things off. Tress was very eloquent even though people talk about a lot of his verbiage didn't have a lot of substance to it. Tress was always very respectful of the time and you had a great routine with him, and that made for a very good working situation."



Paul Keels

"I don't know that Luke Fickell gets the credit he deserves for what he dealt with in 2011 (after Tressel was fired). People refer to him as interim, but if you remember, Ohio State never referred to him as interim. He was the head coach, and if I'm not mistaken, he was given a two-year contract to be head coach and the second year was honored even though he didn't remain head coach.

"It helped having known Luke all those years as an assistant. And even with the difficulties he dealt with, he couldn't have been any better for everything he was facing the one year he was head coach.

"Dealing with Urban was a challenge. Urban did not like doing all the radio obligations. He made that very clear. It was very much a challenge with him, but it was never anything personal and he would tell you that. And even the year after Urban got done when I saw him one time at the Woody Hayes, he even joked how difficult he made it with our radio group in trying to be so professional.

"Ryan Day has just been fantastic, especially given last year when we couldn't do things in person. We had to do all of our interviews on video or over the phone. Ryan was fantastic."

BSB: Now, the basketball coaches (Jim O'Brien, Thad Matta and Chris Holtmann).

Keels: "O'Brien was good. He didn't like doing all that radio stuff, but he understood it was part of it, so Jim was always very good about that stuff.

"Thad was wonderful. For 13 years he was as good as anybody to ever deal with. I've told numerous people, Thad was the exception when you're not really supposed to form personal relationships with the coaches and players you cover. I was fortunate to be able to do that and still do that with Thad and his family. And Holt has picked it up right from where Thad left it off from our standpoint.

"He's been fantastic. Again, very respectful of your time and especially last year with not being able to do interviews in person, with having to do them by phone. I couldn't imagine two better coaches through the last year to deal with than Ryan Day and Chris Holtmann with the restrictions we had to work with."

BSB: What are your favorite road destinations for first football and then basketball?

Keels: "I'll start off by saying, and this will be for different reasons than you imagined, but I really enjoy when we get the chance to go to Wisconsin and Iowa because their two radio announcers (Matt Lepay and Gary Dolphs) are guys that I've become great friends with over the years.

"Wisconsin is a great setting. For people who've never seen a game at Camp Randall, it's one of the most unique, incredible settings you'll ever see. Minnesota's new stadium, which we've only been to twice now, is really a neat stadium to go to as far as press boxes for what we do. It's a great setup.

"Michigan's new press box, what they've done with the radio booths and everything, might be one of the best, and I say that because they consulted with their radio engineer on how to do a broadcast.

"The other one I would point out, and I've been there twice but only once doing the Ohio State games, is Husky Stadium in Seattle at the University of Washington, mostly because the open end of it looks out on Lake Washington. It's so scenic with the boats coming up and parking and going to their seats."

BSB: What's it like to do a game from the Rose Bowl?

Keels: "My first trip to the Rose Bowl was the regular-season game against UCLA, which was the first game after 9/11. It was a day game, so you didn't get the scenery aspect.



FILE PHOTO

CALLING THE SHOTS – Paul Keels (left), the voice of Ohio State since 1998, said head football coach Ryan Day (right) has "just been fantastic" in his experiences with him.

But having been there twice for the Rose Bowl game itself, it really is a phenomenal setting. When you can see the mountains and the way those light up when the sun's setting, just to see all the stuff that accompanies that bowl game, it really is a neat setting, and it's great to have a chance to be able to be there a couple of times for the bowl game itself."

BSB: Basketball arenas don't have the scenic background like mountains or lakes, but what are the ones you like to go to?

Keels: "I would probably say Assembly Hall in Indiana. Just how we look at it – it's from the vantage point we have as announcers. Indiana probably has us maybe 15 rows off the floor. We get pretty much an unhindered view of the court while the game's going on, and I still think Assembly Hall is one of the most unique settings because it still kind of looks like an old college field house in many ways.

"When you think about the Kohl Center in Wisconsin and the Breslin Center in East Lansing, those are two really slick, nice, visiting arenas that kind of combine the college feel with the way their students are close to the floor and also a little bit of a professional look to it."

BSB: What were your worst experiences, if there were any, that maybe you were ill or a sore throat and might not make it through a game?

Keels: "I had a couple of football games and what it was more than anything was an issue with allergies. I think one of them was against Tulane a few years ago, and another one might have been against Troy. I think I had a basketball game against Northwestern where I was just really croaking. It wasn't that I ever thought I was going to lose my voice, but it was really pretty lousy just eking it out.

"The great thing is I'm very fortunate with the people I work with, and they said, 'Hey, you know it's not a crime to miss a game.' I actually did miss a couple of football games in 2010 when I was in the hospital. So those were a couple where I actually was there and I didn't realize that it was as bad as it was when I tried to start doing the games.

"Fortunately, I've been able to talk with my doctor and people. If I get any indication of something like that, they've got some pretty good preventative medical approaches to try to avoid that."

BSB: Who are some of your favorite non-OSU people to interview and interact

with over the years?

Keels: "For football, and this might bother some Ohio State fans, but Brady Hoke (U-M head coach 2011-14) was fantastic, and a lot of it was because Brady's from Ohio and when he'd be around he'd tell Jim and me he would listen to our games. He was great to interview.

"Kirk Ferentz at Iowa, fantastic. The late Randy Walker at Northwestern, but I had a connection with Randy when he was at Miami and I was in Cincinnati. Paul Chryst at Wisconsin has been good, and a guy who has become fantastic as of late is Pat Fitzgerald of Northwestern.

"For basketball, Tom Izzo (Michigan State). He's great for everybody. He's so interview-friendly. Bo Ryan at Wisconsin, and following him, Greg Gard is really, really good to deal with. I would say Steve Pikiell at Rutgers as of late has been very accommodating and very good, and the other guy that's kind of new to everything is Fred Hoiberg at Nebraska."

BSB: You present a neutral broadcast as much as possible in terms of not being a homer. Do Ohio State fans ask you why you don't cheer on the Buckeyes?

Keels: "Maybe at first I heard some of that but not so much as of late. Quite honestly the people I'm most concerned with are my employers. I've never heard any of them say, 'Hey, be more of a cheerleader, be more rah-rah.' Hopefully when people listen, they can tell which team we want to see do well, but you also have to give credit where credit is due or whatever. You have to represent that the other teams make great plays."

BSB: Would you want to do TV games?

Keels: "I have done TV before. When I worked in Detroit, I did some USFL. For 10 years I did the Bengals' preseason games on TV. I had one season where I did Reds games. I did about 50-some games for the Reds in 2010 and will get a chance this summer to do it. I've done some of the games for The Basketball Tournament on ESPN.

"I'm radio-based. The TV thing is a nice change, and it's nice to do something different, especially that I got the chance for 10 years to work next to Anthony Munoz doing Bengals games. I get a chance to do The Basketball Tournament games with Dan Dakich, which is always a riot. I've also done some football and basketball high school tournament games on TV.

"At this stage, at this point, radio is kind of

where home is for me."

BSB: Finally, Ohio State has a far reach, and with Internet broadcasts, where are some of the places people have told you they've listened to your games?

Keels: "We hear from people overseas. I know for the 2002 national championship game we got some e-mail or letters from over there. I can't tell you specifically the places. There's an acquaintance of mine from Columbus years ago who was in China and listening to the games.

"Maybe the biggest thing you get sometimes is when, because of rights and restrictions, when you get into bowl games or you get to championship games or NCAA Tournament games when we can't stream the games on our own Internet and all of a sudden, you get the reaction from people far away. Usually, I run into this with relatives that have been listening during the regular season but when we get to the postseason they can't listen on the Internet because of the network restrictions that exist."

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From Bucks To Buster, May Has Covered It All

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Tim May is a treat. As a longtime Columbus Dispatch reporter, he combined homespun humor and charm with a bulldog approach to get the scoop on Ohio State football and other sports.

He started with the paper in 1976 and covered golf, auto racing, baseball, the NFL and, yes, bowling among his many ventures.

May “retired” in 2018 but he is still active as anyone listening or watching OSU press conferences can attest to with his “just one more quick question.”

The 2017 National Sports Media Ohio Sportswriter of the Year works for Lettermen Row covering the Buckeyes at his leisure, including the Tim May Podcast (available on YouTube, Apple, Spotify, Stitcher and Google Play). The June 29 episode featured former Ohio State football coach Urban Meyer.

May chatted with BSB June 29 and, as only he can, discussed the inner workings of Ohio State football, his thoughts on the coaches he covered, and the games and events he’s written about.

He also recounted how he became famous for predicting one of the great upsets in sports when Columbus native Buster Douglas beat

Mike Tyson on Feb. 10, 1990, in Tokyo.

BSB: You’ve got your hand in a lot of things since leaving the Dispatch. Would you describe yourself as retired?

May: “According to the IRS I’m not totally retired. So, there’s one thing for you.

“There’s no way I was going to be a lifer (at the Dispatch) because I felt like I had already put in three lives just becoming a sportswriter when I was 19 and working six, seven days a week for almost ever, including working vacations, holidays and anything else. I wasn’t burned out, but I didn’t want the daily grind anymore because it had been a grind to a certain extent, but it also was a lot of fun.

“I was going to be retired, but then a few people, entities, asked me if I wanted to do some part-time stuff on the Ohio State realm.

What I was always interested in was a podcast, and Will Crall and Lettermen Row offered me that opportunity and I jumped at it. There was no way I was going to sit and write eight, nine stories a week anymore. That was getting to be no fun. Plus, arthritis was setting in; I’m just joking. But the bottom line is they offered me a chance to do a podcast and interview people I like and just shoot the bull, give opinions. You know I like to give my opinions.

“I still got to do stuff with Channel 10 (WBNS in Columbus) and 97.1 The Fan.

I enjoyed that stuff. I did quite a few radio interviews around the country, including Cleveland. I do a little gig with those guys I enjoy with Andy Baskin (92.3 The Fan). We have a lot of fun, so in essence I’ve gone from writing to primarily talking, and I enjoy the talking more.”

BSB: What kind of freedom does that give you in your personal life to just pick and choose what games you cover or when you write?

May: “It’s almost like an exhilaration when you wake up in the morning and you know you don’t have a deadline every day of the week, or you know there’s not a demand for a story every day of the week. It’s unbelievable what it does for you. Almost, not a mental health situation but, yeah, a little bit. You’re not sitting there all day waiting to get somebody to call you back or to ‘run into them,’ as I like to say, which I had to do countless times. That freedom is crazy what it does for you. I mean, I do fret sometimes what guest I’m going to get for my podcast, whether we’re going to make that hook up or not, but that’s just the way it goes. But that’s not a seven days a week thing. It’s like a day and a half a week thing.

“Just the idea of waking up and knowing you’re going to be playing golf this morning and not playing the game anymore is unbelievable. One of the great things is one of my buddies, Paul Spohn from Channel 10 – Moose as he’s known – retired at almost the same time. He and I have become pretty good golf partners. We like playing golf at 7:30, 8 o’clock in the morning and be done by 10.

“Unless you’ve done it, you really don’t understand it: retirement is underrated. But I’m still not retired, and I still like to know what’s going on. I still get on all the interviews I can get on. I still like to greet these young guys that come in there, these young players. Every year there’s 20, 25 guys that come in for Ohio State and another 22 to 25 guys that go out the door. I still enjoy that aspect of college football, and I still love college football so I’ve kind of got the best of both worlds.”

May was born in Demopolis, Ala. His dad, an Alabama graduate, was a chemical engineer, and his mom worked for Sears while raising four boys. His father took May and his older brother, Ben, to ‘Bama games from 1961-64.

BSB: It sounds like you were in a perfect spot for your love of college football to be spawned?

May: “As I like to say, I saw Joe Namath play on two good knees. I said that way before HBO ever said it.

“My mom was a huge fan of college football, and that’s how I became a fan of college football – football in general, but college football in particular.”

When May was 11 the family moved to Lufkin, Texas, in 1965 when his father was named manager of the Borden chemical plant in Diboll, Texas, “a suburb of Lufkin” as May joked.

At 6-2, and 150 in high school, there was no way May was playing football, but he had an interest in aviation and thought of being an air traffic controller.

“I was always had a passion for aviation. When I was 16 years old, I soloed a Cessna 150 on my 16th birthday. I still have a passion for aviation.”

He worked for his high school paper. When he was in junior college, he got the journalism bug during the Watergate era and got a part-time position at \$2 an hour.

BSB: What was your first job?

May: “In ’73 I was 19 and I started covering high school football games for the Lufkin Daily News. It turned out the sports editor,

after I was working there that fall, wanted a raise so they made him a news writer and they hired me as sports editor in late ’73. I think at the time I was the youngest sports editor of a daily paper in the state of Texas.

“At 19 years old, I was fortunate and working six days a week, having a lot of fun, and people that know anything about anything know that high school football is a huge deal in Texas. They could have filmed ‘Friday Night Lights’ about Lufkin, Texas.

“In 1974 Lufkin had a great team. One of the great football games I ever covered – and I covered Super Bowls, Rose Bowls, obviously national championship games – was Lufkin vs. John Tyler High School of Tyler, Texas. I think Tyler won 7-0. Both teams were ranked in the top five or seven in the state that year, and there were five Southwestern Conference coaches in the press box for a game in Lufkin.

“My point is you had to be there to understand what a great football game it was, but also it cemented this is really what I wanted to do.”

In 1975, his father became the chief chemical engineer for Borden Chemical Company, which was headquartered in Columbus.

BSB: So how does a guy from Lufkin, Texas, end up at The Columbus Dispatch?

May: “They kept trying to get me to come up there and finish college because I was in junior college in Texas when I got the job at the Lufkin News. Suddenly I was a success at 22.

“Street and Smith came out with their magazine (college football preview). I read it cover to cover, and I was always intrigued with Ohio State and Woody Hayes and just the football in the state of Ohio.

“I was always intrigued by that and said, ‘Heck, yeah, I’m going to live up there,’ because I remember in 1968 watching the highlights of Ohio State games. Bill Fleming, I think, hosted that Sunday morning show. That was when Ohio State made the run for the national championship, and I was always intrigued by this huge stadium with confetti flowing. I thought if I go to Ohio State, I could probably go to the games. That would be fun to do, so that is what I did.”

May immediately got part-time work at the Dispatch and had a paid position on the Ohio State paper, The Lantern. The next year he was offered a full-time position by Dispatch sports editor Dick Otte in 1978.

May: “Who needs college anymore, right? Seven years of college down the toilet.

“I never did get my degree. I almost did. I only had a few more hours to go. I lost all interest in that. Whatever I did I put mind into that, put my interest in that. I kind of like looking forward to whatever is coming. I don’t like to look a lot in the rearview mirror, for want of another term.

“I went to work at the Dispatch and the next thing you know I was covering high schools and small colleges. When Bob Baptist got the gig covering Ohio State, I got the gig covering the Browns and Bengals in 1979 or ’80.

“I was there standing about 80 feet from (Browns quarterback) Brian Sipe when he threw the ‘Mistake By the Lake’ (an interception in the end zone to thwart a rally in a loss to the Oakland Raiders in the 1980 AFC Divisional Round). It was the coldest football game in history at that point. The next year I covered the Bengals that great season when they went to the Super Bowl.

“In 1984 I got a call from Herb Stutz, he was the sports editor then. He wanted me to start covering Ohio State football because Bob



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Baptist, I don't know what went on there, but he decided to move onto something else, and Herb asked me if I wanted to cover Ohio State football. I said yeah. I think I also said, 'Are you kidding me?' with something in between 'you' and 'kidding me.'

BSB: Looking back, what are some of the similarities and differences covering the Ohio State football coaches during your time at the Dispatch (Earle Bruce, John Cooper, Jim Tressel, Luke Fickell, Urban Meyer and Ryan Day) from a professional standpoint and trying to interview them while getting to know what made them tick?

May: "They're all different. They're totally different, which is interesting."

"Earle was detail-oriented, almost to a fault. This is when you go to practice. I said this famous line to John Cooper once that I saw him more than my wife during football season, and it was true."

"Earle was obviously passionate about it. He cut his teeth under Woody Hayes and kind of coached a lot like Woody Hayes, but he could go from cold to hot-tempered in a flash and was very demanding. He hated mistakes by the guys. They all did too because you're coaching a football game and you see a big mistake that costs you a game or costs you a series, he's going to hit a flash point."

"If Earle had a bit of a fault it was that he seemed to micromanage as much of the team as possible on both sides of the ball. He was clearly an offensive-minded guy. When he came in for Woody, Earle threw the football. It was play-action protection most of the time that irked a lot of people when it was third-and-11 and you're still using play-action before you pass the ball. He got a lot of criticism for that, but he was throwing the ball with Mike Tomczak, Jim Karsatos, Tom Tupa, a little bit of Greg Frey that last year."

"He was underrated in the sense of trying to be progressive but still hanging onto that I-formation, running-out-the-clock type of offense. But when you have Keith Byars in your backfield, John Woolridge and those types of guys, why wouldn't you be? It finally caught up to him in '87, obviously."

"I enjoyed covering Earle because I talked to him after practice every day. Let me give you an anecdote about him. So, we're sitting there in 1984. Ohio State had this great comeback against Illinois and then they beat Michigan. That was the year Keith Byars would have won the Heisman if he hadn't suffered that high ankle sprain against Wisconsin on the last offensive play of the game. He was second in the Heisman to Doug Flutie. He was rolling."

"They had that great run after they got beat at Wisconsin and they lost at Purdue, which included Mike Tomczak throwing the ball out of bounds on fourth down to stop the clock. Cris Carter made his real debut that day as far as, 'Oh, that guy's going to play a lot.'"

"Anyway, they beat Michigan and have a three-game run and end up being the first team and still the only team (with two losses) in Big Ten history to win the Big Ten championship outright when it wasn't decided by a playoff game."

"So, they go to the Rose Bowl, and I found out Pepper Johnson might not go the Rose Bowl because he owed something like a parking ticket fine to the university."

"This is late December just before they take the Christmas break and then they fly out to LA. I walk into (Earle's) office. It was just me and him. I was asking him all these questions about practice and finally I go, 'By the way, Coach, I'm hearing Pepper Johnson might not be making the trip to the Rose Bowl.'"

"All of a sudden he looks at me and his face



COURTESY OF JEFF SVOBODA

STORIED CAREER – After more than four decades with The Columbus Dispatch, Tim May continues to find work in "retirement" as a podcast host.

gets red. His face is crunched up and he says, 'That's bullshit.' I go, 'What?' He says, 'That's bullshit. You ask me all these questions about practice – how's this going, how's that going and then you throw that question in there? If you've got a question like that you ask that question first. You ask that first.' And I went 'OK.' So, he gave me an answer, 'We're not sure but it looks like he's going to make the trip.'"

"Who knew I would get one of journalism's great lessons from Earle Bruce, but I did that day. I've never been afraid to ask whatever question it is to ask. Remember back then Woody Hayes used to wait for someone to ask him a question that would piss him off so he could then end his press conferences. That was infamous, so you'd pay attention to that and save the salvo for last, but Earle wanted it the other way around, like ripping the Band-Aid off. Hey, that didn't feel so bad."

"That's what I liked about Earle. Just like John Cooper. When he came along, you could ask him anything and not worry about it and I took that lesson and I did the same thing with Tressel and Urban and now with Ryan Day and Luke Fickell for his one year. That's a good lesson to get as a journalist, I guess."

BSB: What was Cooper like? He was known for having a lot of access, but by the end of his time it seemed like the Internet was evolving and more were people covering the Buckeyes, which led to less access. How did you view that?

May: "I used to hang out there at the Woody. Actually, when I started they were at the Biggs facility before they built the Woody. I'll never forget he was at the groundbreaking, and I said, 'Coach, they're about to build an indoor practice facility. I thought you were the one who said, 'If you're going to play in the north Atlantic you've got to train in the north Atlantic.' He said, 'You've got to change. You've got to keep up with what's going on. You've got to be at the front, got to be a fore-runner in these kind of facilities. You need this for recruiting.' I thought it was pretty funny."

"I think they moved into the Woody the second or third week of '87. I used to stay outside the locker room every day after practice in the hallway outside the locker room in the Biggs and then the Woody."

"They had the Heisman trophies in this cabinet in the first edition of the Woody Hayes

center, and I used to lean against the Heisman cabinet waiting for guys to come out of the locker room and ask them questions. I wish I had a picture of me doing that."

"I did that every day, even when Coop was there. The thing about John Cooper, and even Earle, is you could walk down the hall and if they're in the office you could knock on their door and most times they'd sit there and talk to you any time of the day."

"That changed in the Cooper era when things got hot late in his era, but I don't know how many times I sat in his office and was talking to Earle or with Coach Cooper."

"I mean I sat and watched video with Lovie Smith a few times when he was there as the defensive backs coach. I did the same thing with Bill Young when he was the defensive coordinator under Cooper and Joe Hollis, offensive coordinator, offensive line coach and he was there with that cigar. Bill Young was always drinking Coke or Diet Coke. You learned a lot about football in there and a lot of other things."

"It started to change in the late-'90s. There was some incident at one point where somebody reported something about John Cooper's son being involved in some incident which kind of went awry, because it was not exactly the way it had been portrayed. That was when (sports information director) Steve Snapp told me that Cooper didn't want any more people just dropping in."

"I was standing waiting for players in the hall, and Cooper comes by me and said, 'I just don't have the time for people just dropping in and I've got a lot of things going on.'"

"He started explaining to me why he didn't want to do that anymore. I think he stood there for 45 minutes explaining why he didn't have time for people anymore, which I thought was hilarious. So I gave it a couple of weeks, and then I started dropping in again because what the heck, right? Let things blow over."

BSB: Then came Jim Tressel. What was reality vs. perception?

May: "I'll never forget distinctly after Tressel got the job, and don't misconstrue this, I liked Tressel but like everything there's good and bad sides. I dropped in on Tressel his first or second day on the job, and he had Snapp tell me the next day that pretty much that won't be happening anymore."

"Tressel was going to have his practices

open for the most part too, but somebody with a dot.com – at that point that's what we called them lovingly – came and did some kind of story for their little Internet site because about 15 people were reading the Internet back then and came and outlined formations Ohio State was running in practice, a few they were running out of, and that ended open practices for the most part. I don't know whether to blame that person or the Internet. If you sued the Internet you'd probably get a bigger settlement. That pretty much ended that stuff forever but the great thing was cell phones were coming along at that point and I never had qualms calling somebody or texting somebody at any time."

"The great thing about text messages is they don't necessarily have to answer the phone right then to get the message. If they choose to not return the message then or call you back, then that's on them."

BSB: For Fickell's one year in charge, how difficult was that for him and how difficult was it for him dealing with the media?

May: "I was at the (2011) Indianapolis 500, and we were on high alert, meaning the Dispatch. We knew that something's coming down with Jim Tressel. As I was driving home from the race that night, I got the call that the word was it was going down early Monday morning that Jim Tressel's going to resign or be forced to resign or was going to be fired. They'd called him back from a short vacation."

"So, at 7 in the morning I'm sitting outside the Woody Hayes Athletic Center and I think I've got an hour sleep and that's when it came down. I sat out there for one reason. I knew they were going to name Luke Fickell interim head coach. I was the only media guy there because everybody else was up at the Memorial Tournament."

"I think Ohio State finally announced it about 9 a.m. but it had already happened, if you follow my drift, and Luke comes walking out and I walked up to the gate there, because we were separated by that fence, and I said, 'Luke, can I ask you some questions, man? I know this is big, this is huge news.' He says, 'Tim, I can't really talk right now,' and all I said to him was, 'If I had any advice for you, my advice would be focus forward, look forward. What happened in the past, who cares at this point? You've got to look forward to this, this is huge.' He said, 'I know it, I know it,' and he got in his car and drove off."

"There's a lot of reasons to like Luke Fickell but one of them is he's about as down-to-earth as you can get. So, the next day we're sitting there, I think it was in Tressel's office. He's sitting in this chair, and I'm sitting there looking at him. I knew him since he was 17 and being recruited by Ohio State. I looked at him and said, 'Do you believe this?' and he said, 'Nope, it's really hard to believe,' or something like that."

"The interesting thing was he only hired one guy and that was Mike Vrabel, basically his best friend. He had to hire a guy to replace himself."

"I wouldn't say stuck, but otherwise he was left with Tressel's assistants. If you knew anything about Ohio State football and how the system operated, Jim Tressel was the hub in the wheel the way the offense works. Without him, offensively things didn't work the way you wanted."

"Of course, you're missing Terrelle Pryor, who had left school rather than undergo NCAA scrutiny, and the omission of Boom Herron and DeVier Posey. Boom Herron was out five or six games because of the suspension. Posey was out too, a 10-game suspension, or whatever, for a particular thing that

Continued On Page 18

Different Coaches Brought New Challenges For May

Continued From Page 17

if it was now with name, image and likeness those guys would be in commercials right now, but Luke was really handicapped in so many ways.

“Joe Bauserman was going to the quarterback with this young kid named Braxton Miller coming in, and Braxton ended up winning the job by the second or third game. But you’re still sitting there with a freshman quarterback. It was not tailor-made for Luke Fickell to succeed that year.

“I just liked the way he went about his business. He kept his nose to the grindstone and, of course, the rumors started the middle of the year that Urban, who was in his sabbatical, I called it a sabbatical instead of his retirement at Florida, and you have one of the more winningest coaches in college football history percentage-wise as a free agent doing ESPN work but that Ohio State was probably interested in him and vice versa.

“Then after losing the game to Purdue that they could have won, all bets were off. They were actively seeking Urban at that point. You felt bad for Luke because the cards were stacked against him in all sorts of ways. Luke handled everything with class, especially with the news we all broke Monday of the Michigan Week that they were going to hire Urban Meyer. Of course, the school finally acknowledged that later. I don’t know how they thought they could keep that secret until after Michigan Week.

“That’s the thing about Ohio State. They’re doing a better job about it now, about understanding the urgency, than maybe the group did way back then. There’s no such thing as a secret. They’re not operating in a hermetically sealed mayonnaise jar. I’ve got people that give me insight all the time on stuff, and the idea you’re keeping a secret for another five or six days is laughable, just like when Earle got fired. They wanted to fire him, but they wanted him to go through the Michigan game and not go to a bowl game and thinking that was not going to get out for six days. Hell, we already had a story in the Dispatch on Sunday he was going to get fired. It was crazy how they thought like that.

“The point with Luke is him taking that Cincinnati job is great because it shows what he’s really made of. His spending that year as a head coach and not having it exactly as you like as a staff and other areas opened his eyes that if you’re going down, you’ve got to go down with your own people. He’s done a hell of a job at Cincinnati. People can see that.”

BSB: How was Urban to deal with?

May: “My great line about Urban is don’t ask him a question if you don’t want to hear his answer to it. I got to know Urban a little bit when he was a grad assistant in ’86 and ’87 under Earle. And like he said, it wasn’t just Earle that got fired in ’87 it was everybody that worked for him.

“The anecdote there on Earle getting fired was I had gone up to the Michigan press conference because you interviewed Ohio State players on Sunday before the Michigan game back then when Earle was coaching, then on Monday (Dispatch sports editor) George Strode covered the Earle Bruce press conference at the Jai Lai and I went to the Michigan thing with Glenn E. Schembechler and those guys.

“I’ll never forget when I got home, (the Dispatch) had our own plane back then and we flew up and flew back and this was before the Internet, obviously. My wife was working at home at that point. She had left me a note on the counter when I got home like 2:50 or 3 o’clock, and the note said, ‘Earle fired. Bay (athletic director Rick) resigned. Get on it.’

“Of course, when I arrived at the airport I had been left a message also that it had all happened during the (Michigan) press conference. We had a story in the Sunday paper that week saying Earle was going to be fired. Rick Bay and Earle spent all Sunday saying that wasn’t going to happen and of course it did happen on Monday.

“But back to Urban, you had seen that famous video of him calling out a reporter, Jeremy Fowler, for something he had written about the quarterback situation at Florida post-Tebow, so you didn’t know what you were dealing with, but correct me if I’m wrong, I don’t remember Urban ever lecturing us the media at all about how we do our job.

“The only time that really happened was in Chicago in 2018 when that (abuse allegations) story about Zach Smith by Brett McMurphy came out and Urban thought he was reacting to the question he was asked as he thought it was asked. I won’t get into all the minutia, but it was crazy how people parsed words back then.

“The thing that stood out about Urban was his focus as the week went along. It ramped up and it still does. I had him on my podcast recently after he took the Jacksonville Jaguars job. I always liked Urban. Urban’s never going to be known for being warm and fuzzy. I don’t think that’s going to be part of his biography, but he’s pretty straightforward. And, like I said, the answer he gives you is the way he understands things. It may not be totally accurate but usually it was, and I appreciate that and you could ask him anything. I don’t remember Urban hardly ever dodging a question. If you knew something, he wouldn’t deny it. For the most part Urban was forthright, and that’s the best word you can use when you’re dealing with somebody.”

BSB: Your thoughts on Ryan Day and how much is he like or dissimilar to the previous coaches you dealt with?

May: “He’s got a little bit of every one of those guys in him if you really step back, but that’s what a modern-day coach is. If you’re really a modern-day coach, you would like to

study the way other people have done things, and not just the (OSU coaches) but Chip Kelly and all these other guys he’s worked with and for.

“I think he’s almost the consummate modern-day coach in the respect that he’s amiable in dealing with the media. He can be a fire-brand when it comes to expressing what he wants. He can be forceful. You saw he didn’t just take the season being postponed laying down last fall, for example. He was fighting for his players and his team. He knew he had a great team. How many times in your life do you have a team like that?”

“This is what I like about Ryan. There’s no denying he’s following a legend in Urban Meyer. Those are huge shoes, that’s a closet full of shoes you’re trying to follow, and yet he acknowledged it.

“He’s asked what he’s learned from Urban? Well, he’s learned a lot from Urban but he’s learned a lot from Chip Kelly and when he was in the NFL. Not just the X’s and O’s but about being with players at all different levels.

“He learned a lot in 2018 when he coached the first three games of the season during that ridiculous – be sure you use this term – ridiculous suspension for Urban Meyer. He learned a lot then, but he also showed Gene Smith that he had head coach mettle. There was no denying it because he just didn’t walk in and rule like a dictator. He leaned on Greg Schiano and other guys, Mickey Marotti, for advice and help and how to deal with different challenges.

“That showed Gene Smith as much about him as anything else. It’s folly to hire a guy as a head coach who all he’s showing you is his X’s and O’s mentality and not the Jimmies and the Joes – dealing with the players, dealing with the coaches and the support personnel, with the administrative staff, all these things the head coach does that these coordinators, assistant coaches don’t do on a daily basis.

“All the things I’ve just talked about with Ryan are signs of great intelligence. To acknowledge everything that you’ve gone through is great. The ability to lean on people is a sign of intelligence. You hire a great leader, whether it’s a CEO or a head coach, and you surround yourself with people that are as smart or smarter than he is because they’re going to bring stuff to the table. They’re not just going to sit there listening and trying to say the right thing to get in good with you. They’re going to challenge you. I think Ryan really embraces that aspect of it. They’re all self-starters. He’s done a really good job in hiring for the most part.

“The lifeblood of any major college program he gets it: it’s recruiting, recruiting, recruiting. As Jim Tressel used to say, recruiting and shaving are the same thing: If you miss one day you look like a bum.”

BSB: You’ve covered so many different sports and events, including the Los Angeles Olympics in ’84, the Masters and auto racing. What are some of your best memories and moments?

May: “Buster Douglas, obviously. His manager, John Johnson, was a Woody Hayes disciple, an assistant at Ohio State under Woody, and he employed a lot of Woody’s approaches and tactics.

“I predicted that Buster was going to win, and I got a lot of flak the day I ran that story. That’s probably the No. 1 memorable thing that I covered because I was there in Tokyo watching Buster knock him out.”

BSB: That was a bold prediction that nowadays would have gone viral. Why the confidence to stick your neck out?

May: “That’s why I wrote a story, why I thought he was going to win. As I pointed out in the story, an uppercut from Mike Tyson changes everything. He can knock out King Kong with an uppercut.

“The thing I had going for me was I was like an embedded reporter. I watched Buster Douglas get in the best shape of his life. We all knew he had talent if he ever got focused, and he got focused.

“I’m over there (in Tokyo) and looking at Mike Tyson, and he’s not in the best shape of his life. He’s got a corner he’s never heard of. He had divorced himself from a lot of people that had brought him along, and he just didn’t look right. The saving grace for him is he’ll be throwing uppercuts probably his last day on earth. He was born to throw uppercuts, and that could change any fight. It almost did that night in the Tokyo Dome, but Buster got up. Maybe it was a long count but that was Mike Tyson’s fault because he didn’t get to the neutral corner immediately, but Buster was going to get up anyway.”

BSB: Some of the documentaries essentially called you a homer in making the prediction and you got lucky. How do you feel about that?

May: “What irked me a little bit was the latest one that ESPN did last year, like the 30th anniversary of that fight, and they didn’t use that part about me and Buster’s training. I wouldn’t have been there if Buster was from Cleveland or something. So of course, there was a sense of the hometown guy, but the point was that I thought I took more of an objective pre-fight look at that fight than anybody did because I could see the two fighters for what they were at that point in time.

“Yeah, I picked Buster. If Buster got beat, few people would have remembered I picked Buster because who cares, right? But I did.”

BSB: Let’s hit some other favorites quickly. I know you began covering the Indianapolis 500 in 1985, and the next year Bobby Rahal from Trueman racing in nearby Hilliard won it.

May: “I’m sitting in the pits on the wall next to (team owner) Jim Trueman in 1986. He’s dying of cancer, everybody knows it (Trueman died 11 days after the race). I’m standing with him when Bobby Rahal won. That still gives me chills. The access I had with those guys was crazy back then.

“I love covering other sports. I started covering the PBA bowling tournament when it came back to Columbus many years ago because I said, ‘Where can you go in Columbus, Ohio, on a Sunday in February and see the greatest people in the world doing what they do?’ People that are the greatest at bowling.

“I just enjoy the people, and I enjoy the competition when something’s on the line, man. That’s great. I watched the women’s NCAA golf tournament every year, the match play, because something’s on the line. The women’s softball tournament, the World Series, I watch that.

“I’ve always enjoyed covering things when a championship is hanging in the balance, no matter what the sport is. I even did a story on curling one time. I still don’t understand that sport. I enjoyed for a couple of years covering the putt-putt national championships or world championships, whatever it was, when they held it on the west side of Columbus.

“I’ve always enjoyed covering stuff. I’ve covered Super Bowls, what the hell. It doesn’t get much better than that. Rose Bowls, national championships. It’s all been great.”



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JUNE						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 @IND 7:05	2 @IND 1:35	3 @IND 7:05	4 @IND 7:05	5 @IND 7:05
6 @IND 1:35	7	8 @IOW 6:38 CT	9 @IOW 6:38 CT	10 @IOW 7:08 CT	11 @IOW 7:08 CT	12 @IOW 7:08 CT
13 @IOW 1:08 CT	14	15 TOL 7:05	16 TOL 2:05	17 TOL 7:05	18 TOL 7:05	19 TOL 7:05
20 TOL 2:05	21	22 STP 7:05	23 STP 7:05	24 STP 7:05	25 STP 7:05	26 STP 7:05
27 STP 2:05	28	29 @TOL 7:05	30 @TOL 7:05			

JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 @TOL 7:05	2 @TOL 7:05	3 @TOL 7:05
4 @TOL 7:05	5	6 IND 7:05	7 IND 7:05	8 IND 7:05	9 IND 7:05	10 IND 7:05
11 IND 2:05	12	13 @STP 7:05 CT	14 @STP 7:05 CT	15 @STP 7:05 CT	16 @STP 7:05 CT	17 @STP 7:05 CT
18 @STP 2:05 CT	19	20 IOW 7:05	21 IOW 7:05	22 IOW 12:05	23 IOW 7:05	24 IOW 7:05
25 IOW 4:05	26	27 @NAS 7:05 CT	28 @NAS 7:05 CT	29 @NAS 7:05 CT	30 @NAS 7:05 CT	31 @NAS 7:05 CT

AUGUST						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 @NAS 6:15 CT	2	3 OMA 7:05	4 OMA 7:05	5 OMA 7:05	6 OMA 7:05	7 OMA 7:05
8 OMA 4:05	9	10 TOL 7:05	11 TOL 12:05	12 TOL 7:05	13 TOL 7:05	14 TOL 7:05
15 TOL 4:05	16	17 @OMA 7:05 CT	18 @OMA 7:05 CT	19 @OMA 7:05 CT	20 @OMA 7:05 CT	21 @OMA 7:05 CT
22 @OMA 5:05 CT	23	24 @MEM 7:10 CT	25 @MEM 7:10 CT	26 @MEM 7:10 CT	27 @MEM 7:10 CT	28 @MEM 6:35 CT
29 @MEM 2:05 CT	30	31 STP 6:15				

SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 STP 6:15	2 STP 12:05	3 STP 7:05	4 STP 7:05
5 STP 4:05	6	7 GWN 6:15	8 GWN 6:15	9 GWN 6:15	10 GWN 7:05	11 GWN 7:05
12 GWN 4:05	13	14 @TOL 6:35	15 @TOL 6:35	16 @TOL 6:35	17 @TOL 7:05	18 @TOL 5:05
19 @TOL 2:05						

HOME AWAY
 *All dates and game times listed are subject to change
 *All Home Game Times ET *CT-Central Time Zone somewhere

TUE. - "TANSKY TUESDAY DIME-A-DOG" NIGHTS
- 6/15, 6/22, 7/6, 7/20, 8/3, 8/10, 8/31 & 9/7

WED. - "MILITARY & FIRST RESPONDERS" GAMES
- \$5 Reserved Seats for active & retired Military & First Responders
"DOLLAR DAYS"
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THU. - "COPA DE LA DIVISION" - Clippers transform into Los Veleros
"THIRSTY THURSDAYS"
- Beverage Specials on Beer, Margaritas & Soft Drinks

FRI. - "\$5 FRIDAY"
- Five Dollars for a slice of Donato's Pizza & a Pepsi
- Five Dollar Beers
- Five Dollar Wine

SAT. - "PARTY-AT-THE-PARK"
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Tucker Shows No Interest In Slowing Down

By PATRICK MAYHORN
 Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Since taking over as Ohio State's head men's tennis coach in 1999, shortly after the end of his professional playing career, Ty Tucker has experienced an unprecedented amount of success in Columbus. With a 623-94 career record, 12 seasons with 30 or more wins, 14 Big Ten regular-season titles and 13 Big Ten tournament titles, 21 NCAA tournament berths and an indoor NCAA championship in 2019, Tucker's accolades with the Buckeyes are a mouthful to say the least.

That's not even to mention 14 selections as the Big Ten's Coach of the Year, 39 All-Americans and countless players who went on to make a living in tennis after they departed from his program. Tucker's status as the architect of Ohio State as one of the nation's premier tennis programs can't be denied.

In 2020, he earned perhaps the biggest accolade of all when Ohio State unveiled the brand-new Ty Tucker Tennis Facility, a state-of-the-art building for all things tennis, supplying a new, on-campus home for the men's and women's tennis programs. Fresh off Ohio State's first season in its new home, a season that had the Buckeyes square off exclusively against Big Ten foes because of the coronavirus, Tucker sat down with BSB to talk about his ride through the tennis ranks as a player and as a coach that's taken him all the way to the top of the sport.

BSB: Let's start at the beginning. When did you start playing tennis?

Tucker: "I started playing tennis at 4 years old."

BSB: Did you have a moment where it clicked for you and you realized that this was something you wanted to pursue as a career?

Tucker: "You know, I obviously played tennis and then started playing national tournaments at 8 and 9 years old and excelled,

won national championships at 12 years old, was in the world title at 12 and 13 years old. From that, I knew that I was going to be in it for the long haul. I started thinking, 'Hey, obviously I can play in college, and I might be able to play professional tennis.'

"All of a sudden, you're driven on your long days and your hard days. When you start playing a sport at such a young age and you have success, you're going to go through some burnout stages. Through the burnout stages of not really wanting to play much tennis because I had been doing it for so long and still had a long way to go, the thoughts of doing so well and being so good at it, that kept pushing me through to the ultimate goal of playing professionally."

BSB: What brought you to Ohio State originally?

Tucker: "I had a chance to go anywhere – I think I was No. 3 in the nation coming out of high school and had chances to go to the top three or four programs in the country. But I'd always been an Ohio State fan, grew up in Zanesville, Ohio, and everybody around me was Ohio State fans. And that's all I wanted to do, was play for the Buckeyes. It was an easy decision. I came to Ohio State, and they put me in Lincoln Tower and it was a good time."

BSB: When did you know that you wanted to get into coaching?

Tucker: "I knew the last year I was playing professional tennis, I was thinking that I liked the idea of competing forever. And I thought, 'I think I'd like to do this (tennis) forever.' And the college game is the only game where you're allowed to coach on the court and be out there, so I always knew I wanted to do the college coaching."

"I had chances early on as a professional coach, trained a couple of professional players and had a chance early on to take that path. But pro coaching is 33 weeks on the road, different city every week. And you're working for one person. It just never seemed



COURTESY OF OSU ATHLETICS

STAYING IN SCHOOL – Director of tennis and men's tennis head coach Ty Tucker (right) prefers the college game because of rules allowing on-court coaching.

to be any kind of life for a family. I mean, I was quitting tennis because I didn't like to travel 33 weeks a year, all over the world. Why would I want to stay at that level and coach it? I would have kept playing, but the travel was just tough. I decided as soon as I quit playing on the circuit. I went to Detroit for six or eight months and taught tennis.

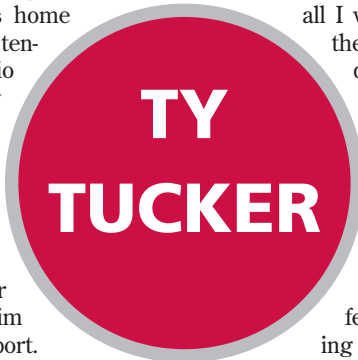
"I waited for an opportunity at the end of the year when I could start looking to get in the assistant coaching game in college. It just happened that a position opened under my former coach (John Daly) at Ohio State. At that time, it was only a few years since the first time college tennis programs actually started paying an assistant. Prior to that, if you were an assistant coach, you were get-

ting a grad degree. I thought, 'I'm going to get paid.'

"(When I played at Ohio State) I actually had left after three years to play professional tennis. I hadn't finished my degree. So my coach was wanting to get me back and offered me the assistant coaching position. I was able to take two classes a quarter to finish my degree while being the assistant coach my first year. I started working with the guys and was addicted to it. I loved the on-court coaching, loved the developing of the players, loved being in the locker room – loved it, loved it, loved it. I just kept working as hard as I could to have a chance. And it took a lot of time. I always make jokes about how in my first 2½ years as an assistant coach, we never won a Big Ten match. In my first year as a head coach, we'd done so much work in the recruiting that all those guys that we had recruited now were juniors and played the matches. And we ended up making the NCAA tournament my first year as a head coach. Ever since then, it's been a ride."

BSB: You mentioned that you got the nod at head coach after two years as an assistant. You were still very young when you got that head coaching job. In retrospect, and even at the time, did you feel ready for that opportunity? Did you feel like you were prepared to take over a program of this size?

Tucker: "You know, I honestly did. I felt like I could take over. I thought I could do the recruiting as a younger guy. I knew I could talk with the guys and could relate to the guys and be able to talk to the parents. And then I felt that I had a great understanding of everything I'd been through with the United States Tennis Association, with the best coaches in the world. I've been traveling around with the USTA since I was 10, 11, 12 years old. I've been around Nick Bollettieri, Harry Hopman, all the guys that were known as the world-class coaches. I've worked with all of them. I honestly felt I had a good handle on how to develop a ton of skills and on getting to a level to where you're very close



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THE INTERVIEW ISSUE: TY TUCKER

to making it professionally. Of course, the problem with tennis is that only 15 Americans a year make money playing.”

BSB: What do you mean by that?

Tucker: “When I was 30 years old, I was the No. 32 player in America and even at that level I couldn’t cover expenses, even though I was a (top-40 athlete in) America in my sport. Think of people that are top-35 in their sports. Most sports, everybody knows that name. But in tennis, right now there’s only six or seven Americans in the top 100 in the world. It’s a tough sport. It’s a tough sport because unless you are a true superstar, you’re going to get very little recognition.”

“If you have to spend \$50,000 a year to travel, (and that’s) without a coach, play 33 tournaments in seven different countries and 15 different states, I mean you’re spending \$50,000 and you’re making \$35,000 in prize money. Once you get the experience and you’ve played 2½ years of pro tennis and you’ve lost \$60,000, (it starts to wear thin). Most of these guys quit because they don’t see any path forward. It’s like, ‘I can’t afford to go back out there. Where’s the money going to come from? I’m \$60,000 in the hole.’”

BSB: What was the biggest thing that you didn’t know when you took over that you picked up on pretty quickly?

Tucker: “I had to come to terms with tennis being a warm-weather sport. It took a while. We were sitting there doing great things, fighting for Big Ten titles early on in my career, and the rankings are still constantly putting your team around No. 20, No. 25 in the country. I was banging my head on the wall.”

“I realized that I have to schedule the best teams in the country. And the only way I’m going to schedule these great teams is if I can go on the road and beat them. They were not going to come here and play me. So I started making deals with coaches, like, ‘We’ll come to your place until we beat you at your place. But as soon as we beat you, you have to come back to us the next year.’”

“That was the only way that was going to get us over the hump was if we were playing Texas, Texas A&M, Georgia, Florida, Stanford, Kentucky and Tennessee, playing the Southern schools. Fast-forward to 20 years later, and the thing that brought us down during the coronavirus is what got us to where we were. We were spinning our wheels, sitting around No. 25 and having a better team than that, just like back then, because we could only play a Big Ten schedule.”

“We started the year at No. 4 in the country. We won 90 percent of our matches and ended up No. 21 in the country. They have a funky way of scoring points in college tennis, in that it goes on your 10 best wins. You have to be playing that big-time national schedule if you want to have a chance to make it. My guys were putting in the work, they deserved the opportunity.”

BSB: Was there anything that caught you off guard when you first started playing those big matches?

Tucker: “I didn’t know then what I know now, about how tough it really is to win on the road and how good you have to be to win on the road. I didn’t fully understand that until we didn’t lose one at home from April 6, 2003, to March 6, 2015, a span of 4,352 days. We have the longest home win streak in the history of athletics. We won 200 home matches in a row.”

“I think back to some of those teams that were able to get us in a position to where Georgia would come here and play us, or Texas would come here and play us. These



COURTESY OF OSU ATHLETICS

HIRE FROM WITHIN – Ty Tucker (left) found success in hiring former players such as Justin Kronauge (right).

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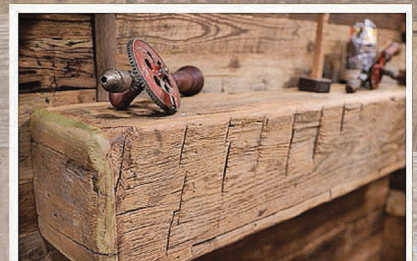


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Continued On Page 22

Tucker Still Hunting For First Outdoor Crown

Continued From Page 21

superpowers across the country would come to Columbus to play us. We had to beat them on the road. I just think back on how good those teams were early on, but we couldn't get enough of a schedule for them to really show how good they were. We were finishing, like I said, No. 14, 15, 18, 19 and 20, just because we didn't get the opportunities to play."

BSB: Was there a team or a moment where you thought, 'OK, we're established. We've made it.' Did you have a team or a match that did that for you?

Tucker: "Absolutely not. Any big match, we play the match and five to six days later, somebody else like Georgia is coming in. Last March, when we got off campus, I looked back at that February 2020 schedule and we played No. 1 Texas, beat them. Five days later, we played No. 1 USC. We could never, ever think we made a dream. We never, ever, ever smell the roses because someone is always coming to try and thump you.

"On top of that, through my career, we've lost in the finals of the outdoor NCAA nationals twice, and we've played in the finals of the national indoor seven times and won two of them. But it doesn't quite get the credit that the NCAA outdoors do, even though the exact same teams play. If we're going to play 75 percent of our matches inside, we always try to build an indoor team.

"Does it hurt us down the stretch? You know, probably a little bit at the NCAA outdoors, but it's a tricky thing, playing the second round of the NCAA tournament in Columbus, Ohio, in the beginning of May on a 58-degree day, and then seven days later being in Orlando, Florida on a 90-degree day. Especially after we're traveling around the month of April playing in Big Ten cities and it's either indoors or you're playing outdoors in 50-degree weather that feels like 40 because there's crazy wind."

BSB: I was going to ask about how you maintain hunger and fire within a program that's won so many Big Ten titles, but just from talking to you, I get a



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pretty good idea for it.

Tucker: "It's not hard. I mean, you take a look at your guys out there and they're putting in the time and they're doing everything you're asking from them. You've got to do everything for them. That doesn't mean just running around, rubbing their shoulders and making sure they're extremely happy. Guys are showing up here wanting to get better in tennis, wanting to have a chance to play professional tennis.

"And I tell them, 'I understand you want to have a chance to play professional tennis, but you know, top 40 in America doesn't make it. You're going to have to go outside the comfort zone. You can't look me in the face and tell me you want to be a professional, but not want to put in the kind of work you're going to have to put in to be one.'"

BSB: You've become pretty familiar with bringing back former players as assistants. What is the biggest benefit to that?

Tucker: "They've been taught certain things through the years about anything from where we're going to hit a ball, to what we're going to do off the court. It's easy for them to hit the ground running and gain a respect factor from players for guys that played here and that have gone through the same battles that they'll be going through. It seems to be the right thing to do because I didn't early on. I was hiring an assistant coach every two years back in the day. There was a run of assistant coaches that never, ever stepped foot on Ohio State's campus.

"Then, I got it really right with Justin Kronauge. He was obviously the program leader in wins, an outstanding player from Centerville, Ohio.

"Then I started learning new things, like, 'Why is this really working so well?' Well, I'm from Zanesville, Ohio; he's from Centerville, Ohio. I can drive 30 miles down the road on a Wednesday night, leaving the office at 6:30 p.m., be at my mom's place and Buckeye Lake at 7 p.m., having dinner. With that closeness, Ohio State tennis is always open.

"There are the summertime rules and holiday rules, where, since we're considered an individual sport, if a player wants to play during those breaks, we're allowed to play with them unlimited hours, as long as they're volunteering their time. So all of a sudden I said, 'Wow, this is working pretty well because Justin doesn't have to go anywhere for two weeks in the summertime to see his family, or two weeks during Christmas vacation or something like that.'

"Suddenly, like I said, Ohio State tennis is always open. There's someone here. If you want to hit on Christmas day, you can hit on Christmas day. I started thinking that was kind of a byproduct of, not only is Justin unbelievable, but Justin's situation is always on the same page as mine. We have families all within 50 miles of here and you don't have to take weeks off in the summer to go see your family."

BSB: I want to ask about how you've seen the college game change from your time as a player to early in your coaching career to now. What are some of the biggest differences that you've noticed, be it play, recruiting or anything else?

Tucker: "I mean, recruiting is a bear. It used to be that you had to get out there and put boots on the ground. All of a sudden Facebook changed that. You could start live-streaming, watching kids and being in touch with them while you never have even

seen them play. Back then, to be ahead of the game, sometimes you have to change planes three times to get somewhere in Europe, somewhere in Asia, somewhere to be able to find a player. But now, you lift up that rock and you think you've found the diamond in the rough and there'll be seven, eight different coaches crawling like worms all over him by the time you get there. The recruiting game is so much tougher.

"A lot of people don't understand. I mean, there are a lot of things in this recruiting game, especially in sports where you don't give full scholarships. We have 4½ scholarships, so we can give a full scholarship, but it's tough to give a full scholarship. If that guy gets injured, now you're trying to put a team out there on the court with 3½ scholarships. It's tough to have success like that.

"It's a little bit tricky trying to talk kids into paying \$10,000 to come to your school over getting a full scholarship at another school. People have different tricks, and private schools go by different things, and some schools are allowed to give a 12 credit hours scholarship where you're only allowed to take 12 credits. Meanwhile, at a place like Ohio State, you get a scholarship for tuition. You can take up to 18 credits a semester, while some schools give those 12 credit hours scholarships. Now all of a sudden to give a full scholarship only costs them 70 percent because you can't take more than 12 hours.

"The game has changed, too, with big-time strength and conditioning coaches at these universities doing great work with the student-athletes. The game has become more powerful. It's changed because they've changed the rule in college tennis, too, where in pro tennis a game gets to deuce, you have to win two points in a row to win the game. In college tennis, when it gets to deuce, it's sudden death, that point wins. It's called no-ad scoring and it's very fast-paced.

"We play that in college, which has some good effects for the players and some bad effects for the players trying to be professional tennis players. For the spectator, it's an unbelievable change because back in the day, you'd play some college matches and they'd last 4½ hours and people would show up, have 2½ hours on a Saturday to spend watching tennis and leave in 2½ hours not knowing who won.

"Nowadays it's pretty cool because you can honestly go to a tennis match and it's kind of like basketball. It could be over in an hour and 45 minutes to two hours and you can also get more fan support and things. However, the players are not getting in the shape that they probably need. Some of those games as a pro last 10 or 15 minutes because guys are struggling to win two points in a row once it gets to deuce."

BSB: I want to ask you about the women's team as well, given your status as the director of tennis. How has that team made that leap in recent years to winning the Big Ten this year? What have you seen from that program?

Tucker: "I mean, they've got a great culture. They put a lot of time in, man. They practice very hard. They've got a strong coaching staff, led by coach Melissa Schaub. They want to be here. Melissa is kind of like Kronauge and myself where she's just 45, 50 miles north. She grew up in Lexington, Ohio.

So she's able to keep her finger on the pulse every day. She's somebody who loves tennis, comes from the tennis family.

"They've done a great job. They got their first big player with Francesca Di Lorenzo (who arrived in 2015), who was the No. 1 player in the country and state a few years back.

"That's your break, getting a girl like her, and you have big results, get to the semifinals. But then she turns pro a little bit early, and you're not expecting that. They had to reshuffle the lineup, but two years later they're back putting a great team together. Look for very big things from them this year.

"(Like the men's team), they got hurt very much by the coronavirus. They were easily a top-eight, -nine program in the country and ended up in the round of 16 and the seeding put them at No. 16 in the country. They end up playing the University of Texas, who won the NCAA title. They gave them a run for their money in the round of 16.

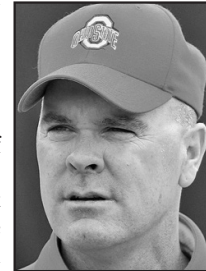
"Look for big things. They've got great coaches, but you know, you're never going to be anywhere if you don't have great student-athletes and you're not going to have great student-athletes if you don't do the recruiting, and once they get here, you have to develop them. They do that. There's a plan in place and a great culture. I think that the sky's the limit in the next couple of years with the women's tennis team."

BSB: Finally, I have to ask you about the facility. What does it mean to you to have this beautiful new tennis facility that bears your name at a school that you've given so much time to?

Tucker: "It's unbelievable. I get calls from people all the time that drove by. I got three calls from people that thought I died. It's good, it's humbling, and I'm just so fortunate and grateful to Ohio State in all aspects and to have the donors and the people out there. The Shulman family, the Weiler family, the Norris family – I don't hesitate to give those guys a shout-out. What they've done for Ohio State athletics is just – you can't even measure it. I mean, for years to come, we'll play in the best indoor tennis facility in the country. Not only does it have my name on it, but you would have to send in a heck of a politician to sell that there's a better indoor facility in the world.

"I mean, it's got it all. It's absolutely got it all. We're lucky to be here. We're in a place like Ohio State and had some success and done some good things, and now we've got the best indoor facility in the country to play in. I just hope to go to work every day, seven days a week to keep it going, because it means a lot to me. It means a lot to the ladies' team, and it means a lot to the coaches. It's fun to see a non-revenue sport where people actually live it.

"Ohio State gives us a heck of an opportunity, but you have to earn it. I've been here long enough to know what happens when you don't win. You've got to provide a quality student-athlete experience, and people have to graduate, and you have to give them the best possible chance to succeed on the court, because this is Ohio State. We're all lucky to be here at Ohio State and here in this facility. I can't even say it. I haven't even been able to say the name of it. I've never said the name of the tennis center. That's how much it means."



Ty Tucker

Right Place, Right Time Starts Park's Career

By WYATT CROSER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

He may have graduated from Ohio State and he may have loved Ohio State football, but Jack Park did not start out expecting to be where he is today.

The Ohio State football historian started off searching for a lengthy career in the business world, but it took one night, many moments of good fortune and an eventual radio appearance on a rainy day to turn Park's career path in a completely different direction.

Now, after years of speaking, writing books and serving as one of the top resources for Ohio State history, Park is being named the 2021 Ohio State Football Person of the Year by the Agonis Club and will be honored for it on July 26.

Before that, Park spoke to BSB about how he even became an Ohio State fan in the first place, as well as his experiences with a variety of head coaches and which games stand among his favorites in the program's history.

BSB: Looking all the way back to when you were growing up, how did you initially become an Ohio State fan?

Park: "It was really a family thing. My dad was a graduate of Ohio State University. My mother was a graduate of Ohio University, and she was a schoolteacher. But she loved sports, and my dad being an Ohio State graduate, loved Ohio State football.

"I was very fortunate as a kid. I'm an only child, and when I was around 10 years old, my dad started getting season tickets for the three of us to attend the Ohio State football games. So we became big Buckeye fans. I became a big Buckeye fan as a kid. My mother was, too. The only time my mother cheered against Ohio State was in basketball at that time when Ohio University might play Ohio State.

"My dad was apparently a very good high school athlete. He didn't play anything in college, but he was really just a huge sports fan, and as a kid, we used to come up from time to time to Cleveland to see the Cleveland Indians play and things like that. That's basically how I got started on it. And then of course after high school, I elected to go to Ohio State, and then it just continued after that."

BSB: From there, where did the major interest in not only Ohio State, but the history of Ohio State football come from?

Park: "After Ohio State, I went to the University of Pittsburgh to get an MBA, and I had no idea that I might ever get back to Ohio. But I had a real interest in the business career, and after getting the MBA, I also met my wife there. She was in the undergraduate school at that time at Carnegie Mellon University, that was Sue Rowney, and we soon got married after I finished graduate school.

"Then, one of the real coincidences of a lifetime happened soon after we got married. Westinghouse asked me if I would like to transfer to Columbus to work in the Westinghouse major appliance plant there. And the people that did that, I don't think they realized that I was from Columbus and

it was also an excellent job opportunity, so I definitely took the opportunity to do that. I was very grateful for that. It brought me back to the Columbus area.

"We bought our first home here in Upper Arlington when we came back here and have been here ever since. I've changed jobs a couple times, and then I went into the professional speaking business about 25 years ago, and that's when you cut off all your contact with your corporations and do it on your own. And that's where my football speaking career really took off, so to speak."

BSB: Was there a certain moment in time where you started to really feel like you became the go-to guy for Ohio State history?

Park: "There's an evening that happened, and I've thought about this many, many times over my lifetime. If this hadn't happened, I probably would never have been able to do what I do today. I was one of the higher executives in the Westinghouse plant out on the west side here. And the Westinghouse plant was a big contributor to a lot of events in the city of Columbus that were noteworthy. One was Boy Scout week, and Boy Scout week happens on the second week of February every year. At that time there was a dinner.

"The general manager of our division at Westinghouse was a man by the name of Gil Diekmann. Gil with a great executive. He was a really great businessman, wonderful man to work for – very demanding and very fair. And about 3:00 the afternoon of the dinner one year, he came down to my office and he handed me this brochure and he said, 'Hey, could you do me a favor? I'm supposed to go to this Boy Scout dinner tonight to represent an Eagle Scout. Westinghouse is honoring an Eagle Scout. But something has come up and I can't go tonight.' And I say, 'Sure.'

"The reason he chose me as the keynote speaker that night for the dinner was a man by the name of John Gordon. He came to Columbus as the first play-by-play voice of the Columbus Clippers, and he became sports director at what's now 97.1 The Fan but was at that time WBNS radio, and John also did the play-by-play of Ohio State football. And so Gil said, 'Hey, I thought about you, because there's a sports guy that's a keynote speaker,' and Gil told me he says, 'I know what a sports guy you are with Ohio State football, and I just thought you might like to go.'

"So I called my wife, went past home, put on a little bit of a cleaner shirt and got dressed up a little bit more and went to that dinner. Lo and behold, my seat that night was at the same table as John Gordon. Now, there's a lot of conversation around the table and everything, and we talked Ohio State football and he gave his presentation, and as dinner is over, John Gordon came up to me and he said, 'I was so impressed with your knowledge of Ohio State football history during the conversation with our table.' He said, 'I'm starting a sports talk show on WBNS radio this fall. Do you have a card?' I said sure. He said, 'I would like to call you. I would like to have you come in as a guest.'

"Now how many people really follow up on that? Well, the following September, he called me and he said, 'You remember me?' I said, 'Sure I remember you.' And he said,



FILE PHOTO

HAPPY COINCIDENCES – Jack Park (right, pictured with BSB managing editor emeritus Mark Rea) had his journey as an Ohio State historian begin by sitting at a table with play-by-play voice John Gordon at a dinner for the Boy Scouts.

'I'd like to have you come on as a guest. You're going to be a guest on the show with Ed Littler.' Now Ed was maybe the No. 2 sports guy. The Clippers were in the playoffs, and John said, 'I won't be there to do the interview with you because I'm going to be over at (at that time) Franklin County Stadium to do the Clippers game, but sports talk comes on at about 7:05, and then we go to the Clippers game around 7:35 or 7:45. You'll be on the air with Ed Littler, and I just wanted you to talk about Ohio State football with Ed, and then we go the Clippers game.' I said, 'Sure, I can do that.'

"Now, I'd never been on the radio in my life. I got down to the station at night, and it was a torrential downpour. I mean terrible. I'm waiting outside there, I'm ringing the bell, I'm getting wet going in. Well, I get inside and Ed Littler comes up, I'd never met him before, he had no idea I'd never been on the radio before. And he said, 'Hey, come in and sit down. I hope you can stay for an hour, because the Clippers game has been rained out and John's over at the stadium, so I'm going to be doing the show. We'll be on the air from like 7:05 until 8:00 on sports talk, and I hope you can take questions from the audience on Ohio State football.' I said, 'Sure, I can do that.'

"Well, everybody's home that night, it's a torrential downpour. People are calling in, and I'm answering all the questions. And when we take the last commercial break, prior to 8:00, he said to me that this is really going well. And the Clippers game had rained out, so he said, 'Can you stay for a second hour?' I said, 'Yeah, I can do that.' As we start to approach the end of the second hour, he said, 'Can you stay a third hour?' I said, 'Yeah, I can stay a third hour.' And so I did that. I did three hours of sports talk with a guy that had no idea I had never been on the radio before.

"That's a Thursday night. The next Monday morning, a man by the name of Tom Stewart, he was the general manager of WBNS radio back in the '80s and all that, calls me. I didn't know who Tom Stewart was

at all. I never heard the name before. I'm at my office next Monday morning, and I get a telephone call.

"The guy said, 'You don't know me. I'm Tom Stewart. I'm the general manager of WBNS radio. I was home Thursday evening during that torrential downpour, and I listened to all of your stuff on the radio. So the next morning I got three or four of our people together and we talked about you, and I don't know if you'd want to do a very small part-time position on Saturdays prior to the football games on the pregame show. You seem to have a lot of knowledge, and we'd like to talk to you about coming on board with us and doing two or three little segments on Saturday morning.' And that's where it all started.

"It basically became an everyday thing. I used to go in once a week and record a feature for the next six days. In other words, Monday through Saturday. And then from after the radio, a lot of people, a lot of corporations and lot of organizations started to call me to come out and speak to their organizations. And that led, basically, with all the features I did on WBNS Radio, eventually I had all those recordings, and somebody said I ought to write a book.

"That eventually led to my first book, and Archie Griffin, fortunately a good friend of mine, was generous enough to do the foreword for the first book. And so I've just kept on after that. I've written what is now six different books on Ohio State football. But that really changed my career."

BSB: With such a big passion for Ohio State, was it ever a goal to do something with all that knowledge?

Park: "Growing up and being such a football fan long before this happened on the radio, I had no goal of really doing anything involving football. It just happened. And that night on the radio changed everything. It basically changed my life. People called and they liked it and everything, and I had this

Continued On Page 24

Park Speaks On Memories Of OSU Coaches

Continued From Page 23

built-up knowledge of Ohio State football, and I've had a lot of people sponsor me a lot."

BSB: What has your relationship been like with BSB over its more than 40 years of existence?

Park: "(BSB publisher) Frank Moskowitz, as you know, has obviously promoted me quite a bit there. I don't think we ever did anything financially together, but we supported each other and sometimes when I did speeches for Ohio State alumni clubs throughout the state of Ohio, I would stop down at your office and pick up a whole stack of the Buckeye Sports Bulletins. Then I would take them to the dinner, pass them out and encourage people to read it and pick up a subscription. Frank and I have worked together that way a lot."

BSB: I wanted to ask you about each of the coaches whom you've experienced at Ohio State. To start it off, when you look back at the Woody Hayes era, what stands out looking back all these years later about his lengthy tenure?

Park: "I didn't know Woody Hayes very well at all. I had five different contacts or interviews with him, and we became acquaintances. I wouldn't say we became friends. We didn't have that much of a contact together; we were acquaintances. If I might see Woody at a dinner later on, maybe shortly before he passed away, I think he would recognize me and he'd say, 'Hey, how you doing?' I'm not sure he could even come up with my name."

"Looking back at all the years I've studied Hayes and everything, Hayes basically was a great American. He loved this country of ours more than almost anybody ever. He served in the Pacific during World War II. He really, really honored General George Patton. That was his hero. He studied military history like you wouldn't believe. He could teach a military history course probably better than most history teachers. And he particularly was very fond of explaining to people how America broke the Japanese code and won the Battle of Midway Island."

"He would always say that had we not broken the Japanese code and had the Japanese won the Battle of Midway, they would have been moving east and we probably would have had fighting on United States soil before World War II was over, and we may have lost the war. He was very, very knowledgeable. He could take you from Midway Island down through Iwo Jima and to, basically, winning the war and then the Pacific and everything like that, and he loved to talk about that. He would rather talk about that than he would about football."

"Football wise, he was, in my opinion, and I know a lot of people would not agree with this, and you can certainly quote me on this – his positive impact on the Ohio State University, in my opinion, is greater than any other person ever. It's greater than William Oxley Thompson, who was such a great president. Gordon Gee was a tremendous president. But I think the man that had the greatest impact on Ohio State was Woody Hayes, and he was a football coach. But

you talk to his players today, a lot of them didn't like him when he coached. He really drove them. He really brought the best out of them."

"He had a 76.1 winning percentage in 28 years. He won 13 Big Ten titles and has all the Heisman Trophy winners in Hopalong Cassidy and obviously the two-time winner in Griffin and all that. But his impact on these players – where they went out and then they did better things as teachers and as lawyers – to me, Hayes has the greatest impact ever of any one person on the great Ohio State University."

BSB: Earle Bruce was the one who took over for Hayes after 28 years at the helm. You had more in-person experience with him. What do you remember about Bruce?

Park: "Earle and I were very good friends. We spoke a lot together, particularly after he was no longer coaching. He had the unenviable position to replace Hayes. I mean, 28 years, who wants to replace Hayes? But Earle came in and took charge tremendously. He came within one point of a national championship in his first year. He was probably under the radar as a big-time college coach at the time he came into Ohio State. He'd been at Iowa State for six years and came in here and did a tremendous job. Never had a losing record of course, and Woody supported him tremendously."

"One of the things I remember, I think for the first two years of Earle's position as head coach here, Hayes would not go to the games. He watched them on television at his home. The reason he did that was he did not want to take any attention away from Earle. He knew if he went to the press box, the press would be there to interview him and get pictures of him and put him on television and, 'What do you think, Coach?' and all that. He didn't want to do that. He never went to an Ohio State game until it was Earle's third year."

"Hayes supported him tremendously, and he spoke to at least one of Earle's senior tackles toward the end of Earle's career and everything like that. Woody died on March 12 of 1987, the year that Earle was eventually let go with a 6-4-1 record, and I've always believed if Woody Hayes was still alive at the end of that season, Ohio State would not have let Earle Bruce go."

"There were different political factors in there, but Woody always supported Earle so strongly and Earle would bring Woody to the practices to talk to the teams. And when he died, the spring before Earle's final season, that took an element out of Earle's coaching, and that wasn't that good of a team anyway. But that's my opinion. I don't think they would have ever fired Earle if Woody had still been alive."

BSB: When people think back to John Cooper, it is often about the Michigan record, but what about Cooper's tenure comes to mind for you?

Park: "The thing about John Cooper I remember is the teams from 1995-1998. That's about as great a four years of football as Ohio State's ever played. Never quite won a national title, but the players he had over that period of time, Bobby Hoying, Mike Vrabel, Ryan Miller, Luke Fickell, Shawn Springs. Eddie George won the Heisman there – I mean, you could go on and on and on. Cooper was probably as good a recruiter as Ohio State's ever had, maybe up until now, and we're doing pretty well now."

"But he was one of the greatest recruiters

of all time. I think it took a little while to get to know John. He was a guy that gave these players a lot of leeway in what they did, maybe off the field, maybe sometimes a little bit too much. He was one of the most media friendly coaches of all time. After practice, you can go in and interview almost any one of the players you wanted to as long as the player wanted to interview with you. It was pretty much an open house that way with John, which I always really respected."

"The other thing I think about with John, his last year was 2000, he was let go, but he has stayed in the Columbus community. He has contributed tremendously to so many social events and charity events over the years, and a lot of people don't know this, but he took a lot of players to the hospitals after practice to visit kids that had serious medical conditions. John's just a really good guy, he's a really good person and I'm a pretty close friend with John. We don't live very far apart here. I haven't seen him now for probably a year and a half because of the virus, but sometimes we've had breakfast together."

BSB: Jim Tressel comes in and wins a national title in two years. Was that something that you expected him to do so quickly, and are there any moments from his career that stand out?

Park: "One of my favorite games of all time is the 2001 Michigan game. When he was introduced as the new Ohio State coach, my late wife and I, we don't go to many basketball games, but 97.1 The Fan had given us two tickets to go to the Ohio State-Michigan game I think it was January 18, 2001. That was the day he was introduced as the head coach, and I went to the press conference. I was in the first row, and it was one of the most inspiring speeches I've ever heard. This guy's coming in, he's a Division I-AA coach at that time. A lot of people thought Glen Mason would get the job, because he's from a bigger school (Minnesota), and one of the biggest, one of the best decisions (former Ohio State athletic director) Andy Geiger ever made was hiring Tressel. And he comes in, he gives this speech. I'm telling you it brought tears to our eyes. And he hadn't even coached a day yet."

"Now this is 4:00 in the afternoon. I go home, and I pick up my wife. We were going to go to dinner and then go to the basketball game. At halftime he's introduced, where he said, 'You will be proud of our young people in the community, in the classroom and most especially in 310 days in Ann Arbor, Michigan.' Here's what that tells me. He knew what was expected of him. You have to beat Michigan. He had figured out over that 24 hours how many days it was from the time he was introduced until we're going to play Michigan up in Ann Arbor."

"Now, Michigan was a big favorite in that game. And Sue and I went up to the game. I remember driving up there that Friday afternoon late, and we have WJR radio on, which at that time was the voice of Michigan football, and they were just mocking Tressel, badly. They played those clips about how you'll be proud of our young people in the community, in the classroom and most importantly in 310 days in Ann Arbor. He never said we're going to win. He said you would be proud, but they turned that around and they said, 'You know Jim Tressel is predicting the victory way back on the day he was hired as head coach, and he's going to find out differently tomorrow.' Well, at the end of that first half, it was 23-0 Ohio State."

"We ended up winning the game 26-20."

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Now, Michigan, with all due respect to Ohio State and everything, I think Michigan probably overlooked Ohio State a little bit, and they just basically took it for granted. It's one of my favorite games of all time. And then of course, Tressel coming back to win the national title in 2002 when we won most of those games coming from behind at the end to win. It's almost like a fairy tale season, and it really was just a result of great, great leadership by Tressel."

BSB: How do you look at Luke Fickell's one year as Ohio State's head coach for the 2011 season?

Park: "I think Fickell did a great job. Now, I'm a little prejudiced here because I'm a good friend of Luke's. But Jim had to move out. I'm not sure what all happened there. I'm not sure they really had to move him out, but he retired or resigned on Memorial Day 2011. And so now Luke Fickell is moved into the head coaching position, and it's only two months until the team reports for fall practice. Luke went through the entire spring practice of 2011 as the defensive coordinator, not knowing he was going to become the head coach.

"What he did over those two months to get ready to become a head coach and coach that team I think was a tremendous accomplishment. I realize the team ended 6-7, had a great homecoming win over Wisconsin and lost a couple games we probably shouldn't have lost. The game out in Nebraska, we were way ahead and they came back at the end. We lost the Michigan game 40-34. But he did a great job under tremendously, tremendously strained circumstances there.

"I don't know if he would have made any changes in the coaching staff, but he couldn't. He had to keep the coaching staff there. For that to be his first job ever as a head coach and being thrust into that, under those circumstances, as opposed to going out and interviewing for a job and then getting the job, it's quite different. I think he deserved a tremendous amount of credit."

BSB: Urban Meyer came to Ohio State and immediately turned the team back into a title contender. Have you ever seen the Buckeyes as consistently strong as they were under Meyer?

Park: "There will probably never be a seven-year period in Ohio State football that would have the success that we had under Urban. I mean nine losses in seven years, the championships. Maybe his greatest year was his first year, 2012, because about a month before that it was ruled that we would be ineligible for postseason play because of the Tressel situation. So he's taking over a team, it's going into a season, knowing that no matter how good you do, you can't go to a bowl game, and you can't go to any type of postseason play. And yet they come back and they win 12 straight games. I mean Meyer really showed what he was all about that first year.

"And then, of course, going on to win the national championship in 2014. Urban won his first 24 games, then they lost to Michigan State in the Big Ten Championship Game in 2013 and lost to Clemson in the Orange Bowl. But we came back and won the national championship in 2014 even with a loss to Virginia Tech. And of course, his win over Alabama that year will always be one of the great wins of all time. That's the last time we've defeated the No. 1-ranked team. So really a great, great season.

"You do have to look at a couple of his losses. The loss to Purdue and the loss to Iowa were so unexpected. But he finished up with a great win in the Rose Bowl against

Washington. I was out there and went to that game. I wanted to be there. I was in the first row of the press conference when he held his press conference after that win over Washington because I just wanted to be there for Urban Meyer's last press conference. He did a tremendous amount for Ohio State. I think he'll do probably pretty well in the NFL. I'm not a big NFL fan. I don't follow the NFL nearly as much as I do college. But I will follow Jacksonville a little bit now because of him.

"I've done some speaking with Urban. I've spoken at a couple of these charity events, and so we've spent a little bit of time together. I probably don't know him quite as well as I got to know Tressel, Bruce and Cooper, but I just admire the guy. Tremendously different personality. If you look at Earle's personality, Cooper's personality, Tressel's personality and then Urban's personality, they're quite different. And now Ryan Day is probably going to be different, too."

BSB: How impressed have you been with Day's first two seasons as head coach for Ohio State?

Park: "It's been tremendous. I wouldn't trade him for any coach in the country right now. I think they put the right guy in the spot. He'll have a low point once in a while. They'll lose a game or so, but everybody does that. But he seems to be so capable and so much on top of things with such a modest attitude. And he's certainly a recruiter if there ever was one. I mean his recruiting may top Urban's before it's all over the way he's bringing in people right now.

"Of course, he has the establishment behind him. You get the Ohio State establishment behind you, that doesn't hurt at all. But I think we're in for a great run. I think he's only 42 years old now, so who knows how long he'll stay. I hope he stays for a long time. Some people think he'll be here a few years and may go to the pros. I don't know. I have no idea, but I hope he stays here for a long time."

BSB: There were coaches before Hayes who made a big impact in Ohio State history. Who stands out as some-one monumental that doesn't get looked at as much?

Park: "Paul Brown came in as the head coach in 1941. He was only 33 years old. He was out of Massillon High School. A lot of people thought that, in spite of the fact that he had done so great at the high school level, it was just a little bit of a risk for them to bring in a guy that young from the high school ranks. And basically, Brown hit the ground running. He lost only one game his first year, and then his second year, 1942, he led Ohio State to its first ever national championship.

"That 1942 season was a very, very special season. The '49 season would also be one. We were 7-2-1, wasn't the most outstanding record at all, but it gave us our first ever Rose Bowl victory. And the coach was Wes Fesler, who had been a three-time All-American with Ohio State in '28, '29 and '30. And Wes had coached different places and then came back to Ohio State in '47. And he was pretty good, he had about a 60 percent winning percentage over four years. He was a real nice guy. A lot of people thought he was too much of a nice guy to be a head coach. But that '49 team he took to the Rose Bowl, we ended up with a 7-7 tie at Michigan that was good enough to put us into the Rose Bowl.

"We were down 7-0 and came back and went ahead, and then California came back. We got the ball toward the end of the game and moved it down, and a guy by the name



FILE PHOTO

ALL-TIME GREAT – Ohio State historian Jack Park said Woody Hayes' 1968 national title team is one of his favorite teams in program history.

of Jimmy Hague kicked a field goal, it wasn't a real long one (18 yards), and that allowed us to win our first Rose Bowl because of that field goal. That was a big moment in Ohio State football history to win its first Rose Bowl without question."

BSB: Is there a certain season that stands out as your favorite in Ohio State history?

Park: "The 1968 team stands out. Hayes' team in 1961 was one of the greatest ones of all time, and the faculty council voted down going to the Rose Bowl. It dealt Woody a tremendous hurt. It had to hurt him inside. All he had done for this university for that time, and his own faculty council votes, not letting him take that team to the Rose Bowl.

"What happened after the '61 season, other schools really benefited from that. Schools like Purdue and Michigan, those that are particularly close to Ohio. Pitt, Penn State, they would come into Ohio to recruit in great Ohio high school football towns and say, 'Hey, you don't want to go to Ohio State. They don't even go to a Rose Bowl when they win the Big Ten title.' The recruiting was really hurt. He had basically a handicap because of that.

"So in 1967, he decided he would do something he had never done before and that would be recruit tremendously strong outside the state of Ohio. Woody always pretty much just recruited Ohio. The 1957 national championship team of Ohio State I think had two players from outside of Ohio on the whole squad. But starting in '67, he recruited tremendously throughout the country. Guys like Jack Tatum out of Passaic, New Jersey. Bruce Jankowski he got out of New Jersey. Timmy Anderson out of West Virginia.

"Of course, the super sophomores of '68 were those freshmen of '67. And that was a change that probably saved his career really. And here's the interesting thing also about Woody. He always said that you need to get better the next time, whatever you do, make the next one better. And starting in 1968 when Woody Hayes was 55 years old, his Ohio State teams would win Big Ten titles nine of the next 10 years. And 55 is when some people start to think about retiring. I

mean he really practiced what he believed in. I mean there's so many things of what he did that I think are so inspirational to people in other walks of life."

BSB: You've been honored as Ohio State Football Person of the Year by the Agonis Club. What does this honor mean for you?

Park: "It's probably the most joyful thing that's ever happened to me, and I have to tell you, it really was unexpected. I didn't expect anything like that. I'm a guy that never played football beyond high school. I played football and basketball. And for this to happen and to recognize me for what they say I've done to help promote Ohio State football is a tribute that I appreciate from the bottom of my heart, and it still has not totally set in.

"When you think of all the people that have won that before – I mean Hayes won that, Tressel, I think Archie, and Greg Lashutka, Bruce is there, Bill Conley, those type of people. To be honored that way, I appreciate it. I just very, very much appreciate the recognition, and I'm just so happy and I'm looking forward to it."

BSB: What is it like looking back and thinking about how it just kind of happened that you did that Eagle Scouts talk and it led to now you're getting honored as a person of the year for Ohio State football?

Park: "Well, without that Eagle Scout banquet and meeting John Gordon, having John Gordon put me on the radio, and then everything else that happened after that, none of this probably would have happened. I mean, all of that stuff eventually led up to writing books, and then it ended up changing my career.

"Instead of basically working for a big corporation or speaking on leadership, I started combining football with leadership, and it was just a gradual thing over so many years with the help from so, so many people. But without that night meeting John Gordon and then being invited to do a radio interview on sports talk, which was a brand-new thing at that time. Had it not been for a rainy night where everybody was home, this probably would not have happened."

Brown Did It All For Bucks During Tenure

By CHASE BROWN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Jim Brown was the longest-serving head coach in Ohio State history and the longest-serving men's golf coach in Big Ten history. In his 36 seasons leading the Ohio State men's golf team, Brown transformed the Buckeyes into one of the country's most refined and most respectable golf programs.

A native of Martins Ferry, Ohio, Brown is a 1966 Ohio State graduate. He played basketball and golf for the Buckeyes, earning three varsity letters in each sport, and his teammates elected him captain of the golf team in his senior season.

Brown's coaching career began in 1967 at Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla., before moving to Kent State University in 1969, where he served as the head golf coach and assistant basketball coach. In 1973, Brown left the Golden Flashes and returned home to Columbus, becoming the ninth golf coach in Ohio State history, a position which he would hold until 2009.

During his tenure, Brown led the Buckeyes to 32 NCAA appearances and 11 top-10 NCAA championship finishes. In addition, Ohio State won its second national championship in program history in 1979. It was the first national title for a northern school in nearly two decades.

Under Brown's guidance, Ohio State won a league-record 17 Big Ten championships. The Buckeyes won the conference title every year from 1976-1990, except for the 1981 and 1988 seasons when they were runners-up.

Brown produced 93 All-Big Ten honorees, an NCAA individual champion in Clark Burroughs (1985), 18 Big Ten medalists, 11 first-team All-America selections and 40 other All-America honorees.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin talked with Brown about his upbringing, college career, coaching career and other miscellaneous Ohio State topics.

BSB: How did you get into golf, and when did you start playing?

Brown: "I started probably playing when I was 7 or 8 years old with my dad down at Belmont Hills Country Club in St. Clairsville, Ohio, and I just fell in love with it. I couldn't get too much of it.

"I played football until about eighth grade and then I let that go, and I just concentrated on golf and basketball and was fortunate enough to qualify for the state high school tournament all four years. The highest I finished was third in the state. In basketball, I was second-team All-Ohio and played in the North vs. South All-Star game."

BSB: What led you to play golf and basketball at Ohio State?

Brown: "The choice was pretty easy back then. I had offers from North Carolina State, Florida, Georgia, Army and Ohio State. They wanted me to play basketball and golf – that was the Lucas and Havlicek era – I figured a guy from Ohio should go to Ohio State if they're offering. I came on a half basketball, half golf scholarship, but when I made the basketball team, Coach (Fred) Taylor moved me over to a full scholarship in basketball, and that freed up some money for golf because Coach (Bob) Kepler only had

two scholarships at the time."

BSB: What was it like to play two varsity sports at Ohio State?

Brown: "Well, back then, it wasn't like it is right now. The golf season was March, April, May and June. We did nothing in the fall or winter, so I just played basketball, just like I did in high school. I started getting in shape in August and played that until March. Then, I'd pick up the golf clubs and start playing golf in the springtime, but you know that's hard to do now because you know all the sports are 12 months a year now."

BSB: You mentioned earlier that you played in the Lucas and Havlicek era of Ohio State basketball. What was it like to play with them and other members of the 1960 national championship team?

Brown: "I was fortunate enough to play basketball against Havlicek in high school. He was a senior when I was a freshman. He was at Bridgeport, and I was at Martins Ferry. Those guys were so good. I mean we come in as freshmen, green behind the ears, and we had a hard time getting a shot off against them. Then they went on to play in the finals, and they got there because they practiced against us all the time.

"One instance in college, I know I drove down the lane, and Lucas clotheslined me and broke my nose. (Trainer) Ernie Biggs picked me up and Fred (Taylor) said, 'Did you learn something today, Brownie? That is bloody nose lane. Don't ever go down there again.' I said, 'I'm not. I'm going to settle for a 12- or 15-foot jumper.'

"But I'm still friends with Lucas, and Bobby Knight was on that team, so I stay in contact with him and Lucas. And, of course, John passed away. Gary Gearhart and Mel Nowell, I still see them in games and everything, so it's like a fraternity."

BSB: What was it like to play for Fred Taylor?

Brown: "Well, I felt very fortunate to play for Fred Taylor and Bob Kepler. I think they were two of the – if not the best coaches, one of the top two or three coaches in the country in their sport – so that was a no-brainer, too. Fred liked a lot of golf, too, so I got along with him well."

BSB: When you started coaching, did you take any of Taylor or Kepler's coaching styles along with you?

Brown: "Everything was off them. I recruited as Fred Taylor did. And that was probably unheard of back then for golf, but I think that's why we were so successful early to get some good kids. Then, once you get good kids in, they all start following. And Kepler, I kind of did my program just like him. He was like a father to all of us. He took care of us and made sure we all graduated. He told us if we need help, come and see him. If you don't need help, I assume you're playing well.

"That's what I used to tell my guys: 'I'm here to help.' The only difference was many of the guys I recruited had their swing coaches back home. When I recruited kids, the parents would say that if my son has a problem, I want him to go back home, and I had no problem with that as long as they got help.

"I wanted them to know that if they say they need help, I was there to help them. If they didn't get help at home and didn't get help



FILE PHOTO

COACH THEM UP – Jim Brown (left) coached Ohio State's men's golf program for 36 seasons, the longest tenure for a head coach in Ohio State history.

from me, I assumed they were playing well."

BSB: Was it always your goal to become the golf coach at Ohio State?

Brown: "When I graduated, I was thinking about turning pro, back when all you needed was \$10,000 to show. But then I got an opportunity to get into Rollins College and get a master's degree, and I was the assistant basketball coach and head golf coach down there, went to night school.

"I was kind of fumbling around a little bit, and I was close to Frank Truitt, the freshman coach who recruited me here, and he had just taken the job at Kent State. So he said, 'You know, why don't you come up and be an assistant basketball coach and head golf coach at Kent State?' I was there for the shooting. I was there from 1968-1973, so that was quite an experience.

"But the spring of 1973, Coach Truitt called me and said, 'Hey, my brother called me and said that (OSU golf coach) Rod Myers was moving to Duke. You wouldn't be interested in the Ohio State job, would you?' I said, 'Frank, get me to the nearest phone.' So really, in the back of my head, I guess when I got into coaching, I was watching Ohio State, and I competed against them when I was at Kent State.

"I thought that it would be neat to get that job, so I interviewed for the job and got the job, and I guess the rest is history."

BSB: Did you ever think you would have such a long tenure as the Ohio State golf coach?

Brown: "Well, yeah, but I had to keep on winning. I was on a one-year contract for 36 years. When people ask me, 'How'd you stay around so long?' I tell them we started winning Big Ten championships, we won a national title and qualified for the NAAs about every year, so I guess they couldn't get rid of me."

BSB: You mentioned your national

title in 1979. How did you assemble that team, and did you think it would win a championship when you put together the roster?

Brown: "The team the year before that was pretty good, too. Rod Spittle from Canada, a Canadian amateur champion, Ralph Guarasci from right here, a state champ for three years, and Rick Borg. We were ranked second or third in the country but didn't play well at the NCAA championship, but that kind of got the ball rolling. We won a big tournament in Memphis. Houston, Wake Forest, and Florida were there – all the big schools are there – and we went down there and kicked their butts. We lucked out and got John Cook to come. Then it just kept rolling.

"From there, Joey Sindelar came, Chris Perry came, and Greg Ladehoff came, and, you know, they just kept coming. That was from 1979 to 1990. I think we won the Big Ten nine or 10 years in there and placed second once. We were the 'School of the North' back then.

"I just tried to stay around the state; I tried to get the best player in Ohio. And then, I went to Michigan, to Indiana, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York. I just kind of stayed in that area. And then, of course, when John came from California. He brought me two players, Steve Runge and Robert Huxtable, and then Gary Nicklaus came up from Florida, which helped out in the late-'80s, early-'90s."

BSB: What are the challenges of being a northern golf program?

Brown: "If kids make up their minds that they're going south, I certainly understood. I just asked them right away to be up-front with me because I'm going to find the next guy if they weren't interested in playing at Ohio State or up north. If your heart is set on going south to play golf, I'm going to find

somebody else.

“So when the schedule evolved and we got pretty good, we started playing in the fall and winter. We’d make winter trips, and we were playing in excellent tournaments and could get in really good matches because we had good teams. I have 18 guys that got their PGA Tour card. And recruits would see those guys after they graduated and be successful on the PGA Tour, and it just kind of kept rolling.”

BSB: Do you still keep up with the players who made it to the PGA Tour?

Brown: “With our 1979 team, we have a reunion every five years, and every one of them showed up at the last one, which was 2019. We had a guy from Scotland come in and from South Carolina, all over. It’s really neat to get together. The stories get better every year.

“So we bring them in and play golf at the Scarlet course, then Muirfield Village on the second day, and go to the ballgame and they introduce us, and we have a little tailgate after the game. They all email me and stay in contact, and we got our little website and email. I’m not on that, though, because I still have a flip phone, but it’s called the ‘Ohio State Buckeye Alumni Golfers’, and I keep in contact with the guys that way.”

BSB: Besides the national championship, what is a highlight of your coaching career at Ohio State?

Brown: “Another highlight of my coaching career is that my son, Jeff, played for me. He lettered all four years, and he played in I think two or three NCAA championships. He won the Ohio state high school championships back in the ‘90s.

“One more is just all the traveling with the guys because you get to know them well. And I’m so proud of them. I think, over those years, only two guys haven’t come back to get their degree. I stressed that, I told them that school is part of the deal, and they’re no good to me if they’re ineligible.”

BSB: Who is the best golfer that you coached whom people don’t know?

Brown: “I would say probably Chris Waltman. He won the U.S. Amateur Public Links one year, and he played in the Masters while he was here. He was just a good kid. He graduated, and now he’s a successful businessman. He is a great guy and true Buckeye from Parma, Ohio.”

BSB: What would you say to golfers to help prepare them for life beyond college?

Brown: “I felt pretty sure that every kid that came to Ohio State wanted to be on the PGA Tour. That was their goal, and that was their parents’. The school was everything. I just told them you know you can’t put all your eggs in one basket.

“The idea of the pros was out there for them, and they worked hard on the course and in the classroom. I checked almost weekly on their tests and everything. I knew when their midterms were and how their finals were going and if they needed help. I did my master’s in guidance and counseling, which helped me keep an eye on them. Golf was the path for some, but we also have doctors, lawyers, dentists and accountants.”

BSB: What are your thoughts on Ohio State’s golfing facilities, and how vital is a course like Scarlet to Ohio State golf?

Brown: “It was essential. It’s a top-five course in the nation. I got a cute story to tell you about Chris Perry and recruiting him out of Minnesota. He was a really good player. And I said, Chris, ‘We’re going to have a great indoor facility’ – this is in, like, 1985 – ‘We’re going to have an indoor, and we’re

going to have the best facility ever.’

“Of course, it never happened, but when it finally happened in 2016, I called Chris and said, ‘Hey, Chris! We got the facility!’ 30 years later. It was a nice recruiting pitch. Back then, we’d practice in French Field House. Still, I think Scarlet is one of the better courses. We host U.S. Open qualifiers and U.S. Amateur qualifiers. The course is terrific. We produced the Golden Bear (Jack Nicklaus), Tom Weiskopf and all those guys on it.”

BSB: What is your relationship with Jack Nicklaus?

Brown: “I think we’re friends. I see him now and then, and I’ve talked to his wife a lot. They’ve helped us out in different ways. He would show up at tournaments, and I’d walked around with him when he was remodeling our golf course. He’s just a great person and he’s a true Buckeye. He loves Ohio State. We even take our recruits through his museum.”

BSB: As is always the discussion, how does Jack Nicklaus compare to Tiger Woods?

Brown: “It depends on what you’re comparing. Jack was on top of the world for a long time. Later on, Tiger Woods did the same, but it’s a whole different time. But I’ll say this. Our pro shop sign says, ‘Home of the world’s greatest golfer,’ referring to Jack Nicklaus. So that’s how I feel about that.”

BSB: In 1995, Scarlet held the NCAA tournament when Tiger Woods was a freshman. What was it like to host Tiger at the championships?

Brown: “Oh, he was a friendly kid from Stanford. We had a little planning beforehand and he participated in that. He was raw back then. He was good. He just hit it as hard as he could. When he found his shot, he’d hit it again. It was exciting for the fans – many fans came out – and Oklahoma State beat Stanford in sudden death. Tiger’s a gentleman, and he knows the game.”

BSB: What are your thoughts on St. John Arena?

Brown: “I wish they still played in there. That was a great place. I’ll tell you what, when you come out of that locker room, you feel like you could jump out and touch the American flag. It was way up there in the middle, but you’re just all pumped up, and the fans were so close to you.

“It was just a great, great facility to play. I hated to see it move, but that’s progress. I think we should play more games over there as I believe it’s a neat place.”

BSB: What do you think about the Schottenstein Center?

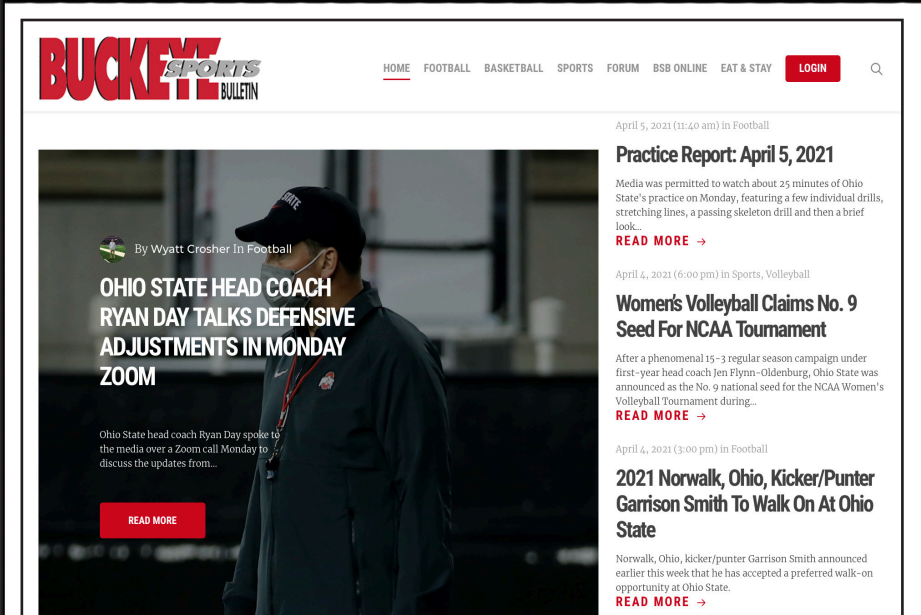
Brown: “I like the Schott. It’s just what everybody else has. You have to do it because of recruiting. I always say, all the Power Five teams are in a facilities war. Michigan builds something, so we make it bigger. It’s a nice building, and I always like taking the kids to see the basketball arena and the football stadium.”

BSB: What are your thoughts on Ohio State building new facilities for its Olympic sports teams?

Brown: “I think we have as good of facilities as anybody in the country – the Covelli Center, Jesse Owens Stadium, the baseball and softball diamonds, the Woody Hayes facility. We’ve got a great golf course, too. I haven’t seen the tennis center, but I always kid Ty Tucker and say, ‘You haven’t done anything. You haven’t even won a national championship. How did you get the building named after you?’ He always says, ‘I raised the money.’ But I think we need the facilities we have because if we don’t, we will get kicked in recruiting.”

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BSB Job The Start For Buckeye Booster President

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Butch Moore began his career in sports at Buckeye Sports Bulletin as a sophomore at Ohio State in the early 80s. Following three years at BSB, Moore handled statistics for local television broadcasts of Buckeye basketball games.

From there, he took his talents into the realm of sports marketing, where he has thrived for more than a quarter of a century at Channel 10. Additionally, Moore became president of the Buckeye Boosters, where he has helped raise money for the Ohio State athletic department.

Moore took the time to talk to BSB for the Interview Issue and discussed his life in sports.

BSB: How did you get started in the sports business?

Moore: "I was a sophomore at Ohio State in the journalism department. And one of my professors knew my interest in sports, and she knew (BSB publisher) Frank (Moskowitz) at the time and said, 'Why don't you give Frank a call if this is something you're interested in?' And I did. We got together – now, keep in mind this is 1982 – Frank was paying me \$20 a story. And I was doing stories on, not football or basketball, I was doing stories on women's

volleyball and golf, etc. I loved what we were doing and continued to be with him for my final three years in college. And at the end of those three years, I was working on football, and got to know some of the sports guys at Channel 6 and started interning over there, and that led to getting into a career in sports marketing."

BSB: Did you interview anyone famous when you were with BSB?

Moore: "Well, my second story I did a story on a young women's golfer at Ohio State named Meg Mallon. And at the time, nobody really knew who Meg was, but Meg has won four majors on the LPGA Tour and obviously has become an incredible golfer worldwide. At the time, she was just a young person that nobody really knew, but she came on to be a great professional golfer."

BSB: I understand that you kept stats for Ohio State basketball on television. Who were the announcers? What were those people like and how did you get that job?

Moore: "When I started interning at Channel 6, WSYX had gotten the rights to air Ohio State basketball games. Remember, in the old days, there were only a couple of games on. Well, at this point, all the games were going to be on, and we had 20 some games. And we hired a broadcasting team of Chuck Underwood for the play-by-play – he

was a radio personality here in town – and Bill Hosket, the former All-American player for Ohio State in the 60s was the color commentator.

"They were just looking for help, and I said, 'Hey, I'll help you, what do you need somebody to do?' And they said, 'How about keep stats?' And I started keeping stats, and we would fly to the away games in a small plane, and I did that. Even after I got into my line of work that I'm in today in sports marketing, I still kept doing that for a few years because I loved doing it, you know, St. John Arena – it was a great time.

"After Chuck left and went to work in Cincinnati, we hired a guy by the name of Lanny Frattare. Your Pennsylvania readers will know him – he was the voice of the Pirates after Bob Prince left the Pirates, and Lanny did it a little while. And then Tom Hamilton, the voice of the Indians, was with 1460 The Fan at the time here in Columbus, and he knew people in Columbus and then obviously he went on to become the voice of the Indians, and he did some of the games. So, I worked with three of those guys and the color commentator on the entire run was Bill Hosket, who became a good friend of mine, and I've been good friends with his kids, and it was just a fun experience – it was good time."

BSB: What memories do you have of your favorite games or favorite players while doing stats for basketball at Ohio State?

Moore: "Back in those days, I remember the senior season that Dennis Hopson had, it

was an unbelievable season that year. He was an incredible scorer. Obviously, watching Jay Burson, as small as he was, being able to dominate the games, was great. And going to the old arenas, going to East Lansing and Jud Heathcote coaching and Scott Skiles. And Bill Hosket knew Jud well, so getting to meet Jud. And going to the old places where Wisconsin played, and Minnesota where you sit below the floor when you're courtside, you're like looking at their feet. When you grew up a sports fan and you see those games inside those facilities and then to be able to go inside those facilities and watch a game. It was a fun experience.

BSB: Speaking of those arenas, you mentioned St. John Arena, and for younger fans, most of their experiences of Ohio State basketball have been in the Schottenstein Center. The men's team played against Kent State at St. John Arena two seasons ago, and it was a different atmosphere than usual. What is your perspective on St. John Arena?

Moore: "Well, obviously, the corporate money and the suites and the tickets and the club-level seats, I understand that the university has to make money, I get that. St. John Arena just to me, the way the seats were laid out, it seemed like the fans were right on top of the opposing team.

"I can remember the great double-overtime game against Indiana (in 1991) there – it was so much louder. It was more intimate, obviously, but it just seemed like the fans were right on top of the opposing team and there was just some great atmosphere in that



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arena. I do wish they would – and they have a little bit in the past done this – I wish they would play a game or two there each year just to give the younger people, who did not grow up watching games there, a feel for it. It's a great atmosphere."

BSB: So, you were doing stats for basketball, and how did your career path go from there?

Moore: "I use this a lot when I talk to young people who are getting started in this business. This business is a lot of who you know, and I always tried to build those relationships and those contacts. One of the broadcasters, Lanny Frattare, knew a guy that worked at Channel 53, and Channel 53 at that time was a low-powered station. And the guy was the sales manager, and we went out for a drink after the game and he met him because he had been friends of his, and that guy ended up hiring me. He was looking for a salesperson, and at that point I wanted to be on air.

"I thought I was going to be the next Dick Enberg or Howard Cosell, etc. So, he promised that if he hired me – he had a position in sales – he'd hire me in sales, and if they ever did a newscast – they weren't doing news at the time – then he would make me his sports reporter. And I said, 'OK, I'll take the job.' And when I got into sales and sports marketing and doing those types of things, I started to see that, 'Hey, maybe this was a better line of work for me.'

"It still kept me engaged with sports, but it was more on the sales and promotion and putting together marketing campaigns for advertisers, and that led to a job at Channel 28. And then led to a job at Channel 6, then ironically, Channel 10 got the rights to Ohio State football and basketball away from Channel 6, and they were looking for somebody to run their sports marketing division, and they hired me 27 years ago. And I've been there ever since."

BSB: So, in 27 years at Channel 10, and some years before that, how have things changed in sports marketing since you started?

Moore: "When I first started, there were very minimal games on television. I mean, ESPN was just starting out, and there was no Big Ten network and there were no outlets. So, when I was growing up, and my kids laugh at this today, you would get to see the Ohio State-Michigan football game, and that might be the only Ohio State football game you get. As these entities started to come on board and started to buy up the rights, obviously they have to pay for the rights. And I used to kid my friends all the time because they would laugh about how many commercials there were during an Ohio State football game and an Ohio State basketball game, and I used to remind them, you can always go back to the old days where there was only one game on.

"Somebody has to pay for the rights to broadcast these games and pay the announcers, etc., so you obviously have to have advertising dollars that play into that. The biggest change to me is the avenues and the outlets. You can buy television, you can buy radio, obviously now, you can buy streaming – the digital is such a big part. You can buy stadium signage; you can buy the programs. I mean there are so many opportunities for an advertiser or a business to get involved with the university or with the broadcast. Or even not just focusing on Ohio State, you know, the Browns, the Bengals, the Reds, the Crew, the Clippers and Blue Jackets, there are a lot of opportunities to get involved with, with sports marketing."

BSB: And, from your perspective, what is the future of sports marketing? What does it look like?

Moore: "Well, the digital is obviously becoming more and more of a player. I can remember when you used to give away digital ads, and that's just not the case anymore. And there's a lot of competition out there. The leagues like the Big Ten bring a lot of that programming inside. All the major networks have streaming services now. So, it could be we get to a point where, you live in Columbus, but let's say you're a Seattle Seahawks fan, and you can get all the Seahawks games through a streaming device – you can basically do that now with the NFL Ticket and those types of things.

"The leagues have more control over it. The Big Ten has more control over it. The Big Ten obviously works with their partners, be it FOX Sports or ESPN or the Big Ten Network, and they decide which games go in which areas, and that's a collaborative effort. It's no secret that Ohio State is going to be on FOX at noon many times this year and moving forward, because Ohio State is the draw, and FOX wants to kick off their coverage of college football with Ohio State.

"I understand the strategy. As a fan, you may say, 'Damn, I hate getting up that early and getting down there and tailgating and going to the game. I'd rather see some 3:30 games,' which I understand. But those decisions are being made to maximize the partnerships. And that's changing very fast, just like when somebody younger may not have cable. They may just stream on Netflix or Apple TV or whatever the case, so there are so many opportunities out there that it's a very crowded field. And it makes for quick change. There's a lot of changes."

BSB: Who are some of your favorite players, coaches, games that you have seen, and do you have any interesting or funny stories from your time working at Ohio State?

Moore: "Famous or favorite games that obviously resonate – I was a student when Ohio State was down by four touchdowns and came back and beat Illinois and Keith Byars lost his shoe. It was not going our way at the beginning, and it turned around. The games with Michigan – the game that sealed us going to the Fiesta Bowl in 2002 when we won the national championship. The overtime game with Michigan.

"I was in the stands when Eddie George broke the rushing record, which obviously was just recently broken. But Eddie George, every time he got the ball, nobody could tackle him. I mean, it was incredible. And then in basketball, the Indiana games obviously resonate with me. The people that I knew when I was doing stats and interviewing, and those types of things became the people that I worked with a lot when I got into sports marketing, and we started working closely with Ohio State.

"What we did when I worked at Channel 10 is we had the television rights and the radio rights, and we went out and got the rights to the game programs, so we could go to an advertiser and we had TV, radio, print, access to tickets, and it was a great opportunity to be able to put those types of deals together. It's been great. I have a passion for sports and the fact that I grew up near Steubenville and to be able to come to Ohio State, and follow all the sports and get to know the people and then make a career out of it for 30 some years, it's been good."

BSB: How did you become president of the Buckeye Boosters?

Moore: "I got to know a gentleman,



PHOTO COURTESY OF BUTCH MOORE

BEHIND THE GAME – From stats and journalism to Buckeye Boosters, Butch Moore has seen Ohio State sports from every angle.

through advertising and following Ohio State, by the name of Dick Smith. Dick was the president of the Boosters for probably 30 years. He asked me to be on the board of the Boosters. And our organization basically works closely with the athletic department. We don't work with any athletes; we don't do things like that. And we have various fundraisers, we go to the away football games, we do a golf outing, we do a kickoff dinner.

"We've done a tour of the stadium, and our booster members, we work with them and many of them go to the bowl games, or they go to a big away game, like when we

went to Oklahoma, or obviously we were going to go to Oregon game. But we try to raise funds, and then we work through Gene Smith and his office to say, 'Hey, we have X amount of dollars that we would like to give to the athletic department for use,' and it's been anything from upgrading the team meeting rooms to working with Chris Holtmann and his team to put graphics up in the practice gyms, where they can put graphics up of the Final Four appearances and those types of things.

Continued On Page 30

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Moore Explains Real Role Of Buckeye Boosters

Continued From Page 29

"I was a member of the board for about 10 years, and unfortunately Dick Smith passed away, and the rest of the board asked me to lead the organization and run for president, and I did. And I've been president ever since."

BSB: So, under today's rules, what is the future of booster groups in your eyes?

Moore: "I chuckle a little bit. We actually thought about changing the name with all these scandals in college football or college basketball. It's always a booster gave them money, right? And that booster name is not really viewed as a great name.

"We do nothing with the players. As a matter of fact, we have our members sign a document that they will have no interaction with players, they will not give players money, jobs, etc. We have our members sign that document each year that they're going to be a member. We work solely with the athletic department, like a donor would.

"The money that we raise, we are a nonprofit, so at the end of the year, we try to work with Gene's office and say, 'Hey we have this amount of money to give to the athletic department; we will make a donation to the athletic department.' We have no interaction with the players whatsoever, and we want to keep it that way. These are by and large central Ohio people, but we have members from all over the country, and these are by and large huge Ohio State

fans, so we don't want to do anything to get Ohio State in trouble. We deal with the athletic department, not the players. And we don't even really deal directly with the coaches other than a coach may say, 'Hey, we'd love to have new graphics or whatever the case may be, can you guys make a donation?'"

BSB: BSB did a story a while back about Damon's and the growth of sports bars. I understand you were an early patron of the famed Damon's. What was it like in the early days?

Moore: "I have kids who are 26 and 25 and they laugh that you go to a sports bar now and they've got all four networks on and you're watching four games at one time. And you can do that anywhere nowadays, I mean, it's easy. But Damon's was over on Olentangy River Road, and we used to time our lunch so we could go over and watch the beginning of the NCAA tournament.

"They would have satellite feed in there, and they'd have three big screen TVs and there would literally be a line out the door because there was really only one place or a couple of places maybe in the city at that time where you could actually watch all the games, instead of just the one that the local Channel 10 got. It was funny, people would sit there for hours on end and watch the games. And you would save a seat for somebody because there was no other place that you could go and watch the games. And now, you can sit in your own living room and just pop from game to game because they're

on CBS, TNT and TBS, so it's much easier."

BSB: Was Damon's proprietor Jon Self a visionary? And do you still go to sports bars and whatever happened to Damon's from your perspective?

Moore: "I don't know all the details on what happened to Damon's. They specialized in ribs and burgers and things like that, like a lot of sports bars do now, be it Roosters or wherever you would go. And there were a couple of places in town, where they actually had somebody hired that understood the satellite coordinates, because each game was on a satellite coordinate for March Madness.

"In Columbus, we would get the local games. We would get Ohio State, or we would get Dayton, Cincinnati or a Big Ten school, but somebody that lived on the West Coast would get UCLA. All those games existed on the satellite. So, these sports bars would hire somebody that understood that, some type of engineer. They would be able to take a TV screen and they had three screens, and they had different satellites going to each one.

"They would be able to get those three games at a time or four games at a time, however many games were going on and then they would have to change the satellite. In March Madness, if the first game started at noon, the second game would be at 2:30, and they would have to change the satellite.

"I think Jon was definitely a visionary on the games. And what Jon went and did after he left Damon's is, and this place is no longer in existence, he opened up the Buckeye Hall of Fame Cafe, which was on Olentangy River Road. And that was a massive sports bar. He actually used that concept in other markets; he went to Marshall and did the Thundering Herd Hall of Fame Cafe; he went to Michigan State and did one there.

"Jon was always in the restaurant industry. And when the Damon's closed, he opened up his own sports bar that had a banquet room and had a massive game room in the back and it was right on Olentangy River Road. It's a hotel now, but it used to be packed as well."

BSB: I understand that you have a bucket list of sporting events, and you've been to quite a few. What are some of your favorite stories and is there anything that you still want to attend that you have not?

Moore: "I would say the bucket list is getting smaller. I used to look at each sport and I would say, 'OK, let's talk football, I want to go

to the Super Bowl.' I've been to three Super Bowls and I wanted to go to the national championship game and the Rose Bowl.

"I just started to make a list looking at each sporting event. I've not been to the Wimbledon or the U.S. Open. Hopefully, the Blue Jackets will someday, but I've not been to the Stanley Cup Finals. But for the most part, as somebody growing up, loving sports, and being able to go to these major sports venues, and these major sporting events, they're all different. Obviously, the national championship football games, Ohio State was in those games, so that made it better. I've been to half a dozen Final Fours, and they're great.

"I always tell people this: Go to the Super Bowl one time just to tell yourself and your friends that you went to the Super Bowl, but I would rather watch the Super Bowl at home. It's not that great in person. Seventy-five percent of the crowd is not rooting for anybody, so it's kind of a corporate event. The Masters is incredible. And I've been fortunate enough to go with a group of guys to the Indianapolis 500. This was my 36th year in a row without a miss. It's an incredible sporting event. I've been very fortunate to go to a lot of them.

"There's still a couple I would love to go to. I'm not a huge tennis fan, but I would love to go to Wimbledon. I'd love to go to the British Open, I've always thought that was really cool, but for the most part I've been pretty fortunate in going to most of the major sporting events."

BSB: What is in the future for Butch Moore?

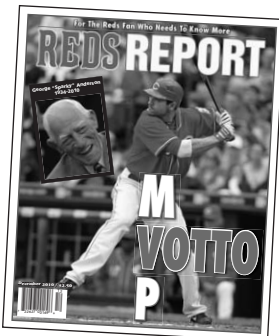
Moore: "Well, my career at Channel 10 is obviously winding down, that's for sure. We have a place in southwest Florida, and I'm looking at some business opportunities down there. We'll always keep a place in Columbus; we'll always be here tailgating. My buddy and I who just retired, Paul Ballenger, he just retired from Channel 10 - we do a tailgate, and we have a website called butchandpaulstailgate.com, and we post pictures and I do a blog and we have a little bit of fun with it.

"But we have been tailgating in the West stadium parking lot for probably 25-30 years. We have, depending on the game, 100 people come by, and we have some fun with it. Now, we've got kids who enjoy it, so my career at Channel 10 is winding down. I've got a little bit of time left there, but my hope is to still be able to golf and go on golf trips and still be able to follow the Buckeyes and still go to as many sporting events as I possibly can."

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Washington's Departure Both Good And Bad

Independence Day came early for college athletes when on July 1 at 12 a.m. constraints by the NCAA were lifted and college athletes were allowed financial benefits for their names, images and likenesses.

It took only a few minutes past midnight for Ohio State sophomore basketball players Zed Key and Eugene Brown to take advantage of the NIL rights and announce partnerships with Yoke Gaming, a video game app. Within 12 hours, Key signed with delivery service Gopuff as well.

COURT REPORT

Craig Merz

Also, July 1 was the deadline for fall/winter sports athletes to enter the transfer portal for their 2021-22 seasons. Normally, the deadline is May 1, but it was moved because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another notable date was June 29, when guard Duane Washington Jr. announced he would leave Ohio State after three seasons and stay in the NBA draft pool.

Bundle those three events and what you've got is the future – for better and worse – of college athletics.

How are they related? Losing Washington, the Buckeyes' leading scorer last season at 16.4 points per game, is a blow for what many consider a top-10 team, but his departure was softened when forward E.J. Liddell, named first-team All-Big Ten last season, told ESPN on July 3 that he was withdrawing his name from the NBA draft process and would return for his junior season.

Of note, the Buckeyes still have one scholarship available. Washington's departure leaves a void but creates opportunities that otherwise would not be there. That's so important in this new era of freedom.

Besides the NIL provisions, the NCAA in April passed legislation that allows athletes a one-time transfer with immediate eligibility at the new school.

In Washington's case, Ohio State coach Chris Holtmann is going to miss his experience that was showcased in dynamic and sometimes erratic ways. But there might be a part of him that knows that had Washington stayed, it could have prevented one of his rising young players from getting more minutes.

And guess what would happen at the end

of the season? Washington would head to the NBA and the kid would likely board the transfer train.

It truly is a conundrum coaches face. If there are two players of equal talent, the wise choice usually is to go with the older, more mature one, but now you do so at the risk of losing a potential star such as incoming freshman four-star guard Malaki Branham.

It's expected that Ohio's 2021 Mr. Basketball will have no trouble breaking into the rotation, but what would have happened if Washington stayed and Branham perceived he was being slighted? Maybe goodbye, Columbus?

There's a saying that you can never have too much talent, and Holtmann is going to discover if that's true this season. He, like all other coaches, must find that balance of winning now and keeping an eye on the future that is sitting down the bench from him wondering if Ohio State was the right choice. That's been going on for decades, but now those players have options.

The other thing coaches of yesteryear, say last season, didn't have to deal with was the monetary factor. The more a player plays, the more valuable he is to a business that has a deal with him. No company wants to shell out dollars to a benchwarmer.

At some point coaches are going to long for the good old days when it was just the players' parents yelling at them.

Next In Line

The Buckeyes have no shortage of guards who will try to pick up the slack in the wake of Washington leaving, although it won't be easy. As a junior he shot 41.0 percent from the floor, including 37.4 percent from three. He added 2.9 assists, averaged 3.4 rebounds and was fearless in wanting to take the clutch shots.

Ohio State also lost starting senior guard C.J. Walker after he decided not to take advantage of a one-time extra season offered because of the pandemic, and Musa Jallow transferred to Charlotte.

However, Penn State transfer Jamari Wheeler joins the team. Fifth-year senior Jimmy Sotos, who sustained a season-ending shoulder injury Jan. 9, returns, and Holtmann has other options, although their experience at the college level is light or nonexistent as is the case with Branham. Eugene Brown is a sophomore, and Meechie Johnson enrolled out of high school in December. Branham arrived on campus as a true freshman shortly after a dominant performance in high school playoff play.

As for Washington, he decided to stay in the

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2022 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Roddy Gayle	SG	6-4	195	★★★★	Youngstown (N.Y.) Lewiston Porter
Bowen Hardman	SG	6-3	160	★★★	Cincinnati Princeton
Bruce Thornton	PG	6-2	205	★★★★	Alpharetta (Ga.) Milton

draft pool after earning a spot in the NBA combine the last week of June and is projected to be a late second-round pick. Liddell did not get invited to the combine, a surefire sign he won't be drafted, but he could still opt to forgo college and sign with the G-League or play overseas.

Liddell, who averaged 16.2 points, 6.7 rebounds and 1.8 assists last season, did not get invited to the combine, a surefire sign he wouldn't be drafted. He could have opted to forgo college and sign with the G-League or play overseas, but he told ESPN that the new world of NIL played a major role in his decision to stay at Ohio State.

"That changes the game really," Liddell said. "It's good that I could be making money. That should have been happening for a long time."

On Campus

The 14-month dead period caused by the pandemic ended June 1 with Holtmann and his staff going all in with a host of prospects, mainly for the 2023 class.

As of July 1 he had the 247sports.com top-rated 2022 class of four-star shooting guard Roddy Gayle Jr., from Youngstown (N.Y.) Lewis Porter Senior, four-star point guard Bruce Thornton of Alpharetta (Ga.) Milton and three-star shooting guard Bowen Hardman from Cincinnati Princeton.

With recruiting in full swing, it was imperative that new assistant coach Tony Skinn was on board. He was hired May 27 from Seton Hall to replace Terry Johnson, who left to become the offensive coordinator for Purdue.

Skinn is from Washington, D.C., and played at George Mason (Fairfax, Va.) so his knowledge of the talent-heavy area that includes Maryland and Virginia will help the Buckeyes' outreach to the East Coast.

"In my opinion, I just think I bring something different from the outside, and I think that's what (Holtmann) was looking for," Skinn said. "Having an opportunity to get a guy like myself who's from the rich DMV (D.C., Maryland, Virginia) – I'm a little biased, so I have to say rich DMV – is a positive thing to be able to get a guy like myself that knows the region that's maybe been untapped a little bit."

By the way, the other schools in the top five for 2022 are UCLA followed by Kansas, Syracuse and Purdue.

Camping

Johnson and Key were cut from the Team USA U19 World Cup camp that was held June 20-22 in Fort Worth, Texas.

A total of 27 players were invited, but the Buckeye pair weren't on the 17-player list that advanced to the next round. Twelve players were selected for the tournament in Latvia from July 3-11.

Key played in all 31 OSU games last season and averaged 5.2 points and 3.4 rebounds. Johnson averaged 1.2 points on 5.9 minutes in 17 games.

It's A Date

Ohio State will host Duke as part of the

ACC/Big Ten Challenge on Nov. 30 in what will be Blue Devils' coach Mike Krzyzewski's final season. This will be Holtmann's first time coaching against him.

Duke leads the series 4-3. The last time Duke was in Columbus was 2011, when the second-ranked Buckeyes beat the No. 3 Blue Devils 85-63. OSU is 8-11 all-time in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

The Buckeyes will also play Xavier on Nov. 18 at the Cintas Center in Cincinnati as part of the Gavitt Games.

OSU leads the series 3-1, but it will be only the third meeting since the 1930s. The most recent was the second round of the 2007 NCAA Tournament in Lexington, Ky., when a last-second shot by Ron Lewis forced overtime and No. 1-seed OSU went on to win 78-71 over the No. 9 Musketeers.

Together Again

Carmen's Crew, consisting mainly of Ohio State alumni, headline the regional for The Basketball Tournament at the Covelli Center July 23-27.

TBT is a 64-team, \$1 million winner-take-all event that will culminate in the championship weekend at the University of Dayton Arena from July 31-Aug. 1.

Carmen's Crew won the 2019 championship. The Covelli Center was supposed to host a regional in 2020, but the pandemic changed plans and a 24-team "bubble" was created at Nationwide Arena in downtown Columbus for the first sporting event in the United States to crown a champion during the pandemic.

Among those expected to play for Carmen's Crew are William Buford, Aaron Craft, Jon Diebler, Jeff Gibbs (Otterbein University), David Lighty, Julian Mavunga (Miami University), Shannon Scott, Evan Ravenel, Lenzelle Smith Jr., Kaleb Wesson and Keyshawn Woods.

Jared Sullinger will be the head coach with Evan Turner and Dallas Lauderdale his assistants.

The top-seeded Carmen Crew's first game is July 23, 9 p.m., vs. No. 16 Mid-American Unity.

For more information, visit thetournament.com.

Jumpers

Lighty joins Carmen's Crew after helping LDLC ASVEL win its second straight French League championship on June 27. He was named the finals' MVP ... Former Buckeye Jae'Sean Tate (2015-18) of the Houston Rockets was named to the NBA's All-Rookie first team after playing in 70 games (58 starts). He averaged 11.3 points, 5.3 rebounds and 2.5 assists per game while shooting 50.6. Over the past 10 seasons, he is the second undrafted player to earn All-Rookie honors. He played in Belgium and Australia following his OSU career. Tate is the sixth Buckeye to make an all-rookie team, following John Havlicek (1962-63), Jerry Lucas (1963-64), Kelvin Ransey (1980-81), Clark Kellogg (1982-83) and D'Angelo Russell (2015-16).



FILE PHOTO

STEPPING UP – E.J. Liddell (center) announced on July 3 that he is withdrawing from the NBA draft and will be returning to Ohio State next year, a welcome development following the departures of C.J. Walker (left) and Duane Washington (right).

Bucks Earn Long-Awaited Tuimoloau Commitment

After well over a year of pursuit and months of whispers about where he might land, Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic five-star defensive lineman J.T. Tuimoloau ended the suspense on July 4 and announced his commitment to Ohio State.

Unable to visit programs during the COVID dead period, Tuimoloau took his recruitment well into extra time to get a chance to take a look at his suitors in person, waiting nearly five months after the February signing day to announce his college destination.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Wyatt Crosher

His wait was rewarded in June, when the dead period was finally lifted and he was able to take trips to home-state Washington on June 4, USC on June 14, Ohio State on June 17 and Oregon on June 23 before canceling the planned final visit to Alabama.

"I'm going to focus on the four schools I've visited," Tuimoloau said to 247Sports' Brandon Huffman. "Ohio State, Oregon, Washington and USC."

Tuimoloau is the No. 3 overall prospect from the 2021 class in the 247Sports composite rankings and has remained the No. 1 prospect in 247's in-site rankings for more than two years.

It seems that the Ohio State visit was enough to convince the 6-5, 277-pound defensive lineman. Though he took a visit to Oregon afterward, rumors swirled that the Ohio State visit had sealed the deal in his recruitment, once Tuimoloau opted against a trip to Alabama, which had long been considered the biggest threat to the Buckeyes on the trail.

"I think I have a pretty good idea of what each of the four schools I've visited offer, and now I'm going to discuss things as a family and come to a decision," Tuimoloau said to Huffman.

Bill Greene, a recruiting writer for Buckeye Scoop, told BSB prior to Tuimoloau's announcement that he thought that Ohio State was in a strong position with the highly touted prospect heading into the visit schedule. He also said that the Buckeyes seemed to keep that momentum going throughout the visit to Columbus.

"I thought they were the slight leader going into the visit just from everything I could gather, which is not easy," Greene said. "I thought they were in great shape, and then, from everyone I talked to, the visit was an A-plus on the Ohio State side of things. They thought they did a great job with the kid and the parents and connected with them. I don't know how J.T. felt about that, but usually, you get a good feeling when you're with someone a couple days like that. It's almost like when you go on a date with a girl for the first time, you know if it's going good or it's going bad."

Greene said that he thinks that Ohio State's track record of developing prospects for the NFL made an impact on the decision. Having former Buckeyes such as Joey Bosa, Nick Bosa and Chase Young thrive at both the collegiate and profes-

sional levels could have been the difference-maker that put Ohio State over the edge in Tuimoloau's recruitment.

At the least, according to Greene, it took Alabama out of the equation.

"I think Ohio State pointed this out perfectly: Do you want to be Chase Young? Do you want to be Nick Bosa? Do you want to be Joey Bosa? Or do you want to be (former Alabama defensive linemen) Quinnen Williams, Daron Payne or Isaiah Buggs?" Greene said "They don't develop Chase Young, Joey and Nick Bosas – they don't develop them. So I think that made the difference."

Tuimoloau joins an already loaded 2021 group for the Buckeyes, though not a group that will jump Alabama for the top spot, despite this pledge.

He's one of five five-star prospects in the group, alongside No. 4 overall player defensive end Jack Sawyer; wide receiver Emeka Egbuka (No. 9 overall); running back TreVeyon Henderson (No. 22) and quarterback Kyle McCord (No. 27), all of whom are already on campus. The Tuimoloau and Sawyer tandem is now the best defensive end recruiting duo in the 247Sports era for Ohio State.

Also on the line in this class are the pair of four-star tackles, Mike Hall (No. 52) and Tyleik Williams (No. 164). This is defensive line coach Larry Johnson's seventh five-star defensive line recruit in his career in the modern recruiting era and his sixth at Ohio State.

Tuimoloau and the Buckeyes will square off against Oregon, the team that likely finished second in his recruitment, on Sept. 11 this season in Ohio Stadium.

Georgia WR Antwi Commits To Buckeyes

Less than 24 hours after Tuimoloau's decision, Suwanee (Ga.) Lambert four-star wide receiver Kojo Antwi announced on July 5 that he was committing to Ohio State. He made the announcement back on March 11 that the decision was between the Buckeyes and Alabama, Georgia, Texas A&M and USC.

Antwi is the 16th-best receiver and No. 115 overall prospect in the 2022 class. He made visits to all five of his finalists, including to Ohio State on June 18. Following that visit, he told Lettermen Row's Jeremy Birmingham that it went well but that he did not want to give up anything involving his decision.

"I really want to keep this commitment low-key," Antwi said to Birmingham. "I'm trying not to really give anybody any guesses on where I'm committing. But Ohio State was great. My family loved Coach (Ryan) Day as a coach and as a person. We had about a 30-minute talk before we left campus and it was great. It will be very tough making a decision, especially after this visit with Ohio State."

As he had hoped, there was a lot of uncertainty as to where Antwi would land. Less than a week before his decision, Antwi had five crystal ball predictions, three of which were for Georgia, one for Ohio State and one for Texas A&M. Ultimately, three more crystal balls in favor of the Buckeyes came in on the last two days before Antwi's decision.

Antwi becomes the fourth wide receiver in the 2022 class, joining Austin (Texas) Lake Travis five-star Caleb Burton,

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2022 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Kojo Antwi	WR	6-0	190	★★★★	Suwanee (Ga.) Lambert
Terrance Brooks	CB	5-11	190	★★★★	Little Elm, Texas
Jyaire Brown	CB	6-0	178	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West
Kaleb Brown	WR	5-11	177	★★★★	Chicago St. Rita
Caleb Burton	WR	6-0	165	★★★★★	Del Valle, Texas
Bennett Christian	TE	6-6	235	★★★★	Acworth (Ga.) Allatoona
Quinn Ewers	QB	6-3	206	★★★★★	Southlake (Texas) Carroll
Benji Gosnell	TE	6-4	225	★★★★	Pilot Mountain (N.C.) East Surry
Kyion Grayes	WR	6-1	170	★★★★	Chandler, Ariz.
Dallan Hayden	RB	5-11	195	★★★★	Memphis (Tenn.) Christian Brothers
C.J. Hicks	LB	6-3	220	★★★★★	Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter
Gabe Powers	LB	6-4	230	★★★★	Marysville, Ohio
Jaheim Singletary	CB	6-1	170	★★★★★	Jacksonville (Fla.) Robert E. Lee
Kye Stokes	ATH	6-2	185	★★★	Seffner (Fla.) Armwood
Tegra Tshabola	OT	6-5	340	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West
Ryan Turner	CB	6-0	180	★★★	Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep

Chicago St. Rita four-star Kaleb Brown and Chandler, Ariz., four-star Kyion Grayes.

The Antwi decision moves wide receivers coach Brian Hartline into the top five recruiters for the class, according to 247Sports. If he were to remain in the top 10, Hartline will have been ranked in the top 10 of the recruiter rankings for three consecutive classes.

Bucks Pull Off Upset, Earn Brooks Commitment

Ohio State has pulled off a shocker on the recruiting trail. After hosting him for an official visit on June 21, Ohio State landed a commitment June 30 from Little Elm, Texas, four-star cornerback Terrance Brooks, who was long considered an Alabama or Texas A&M lean.

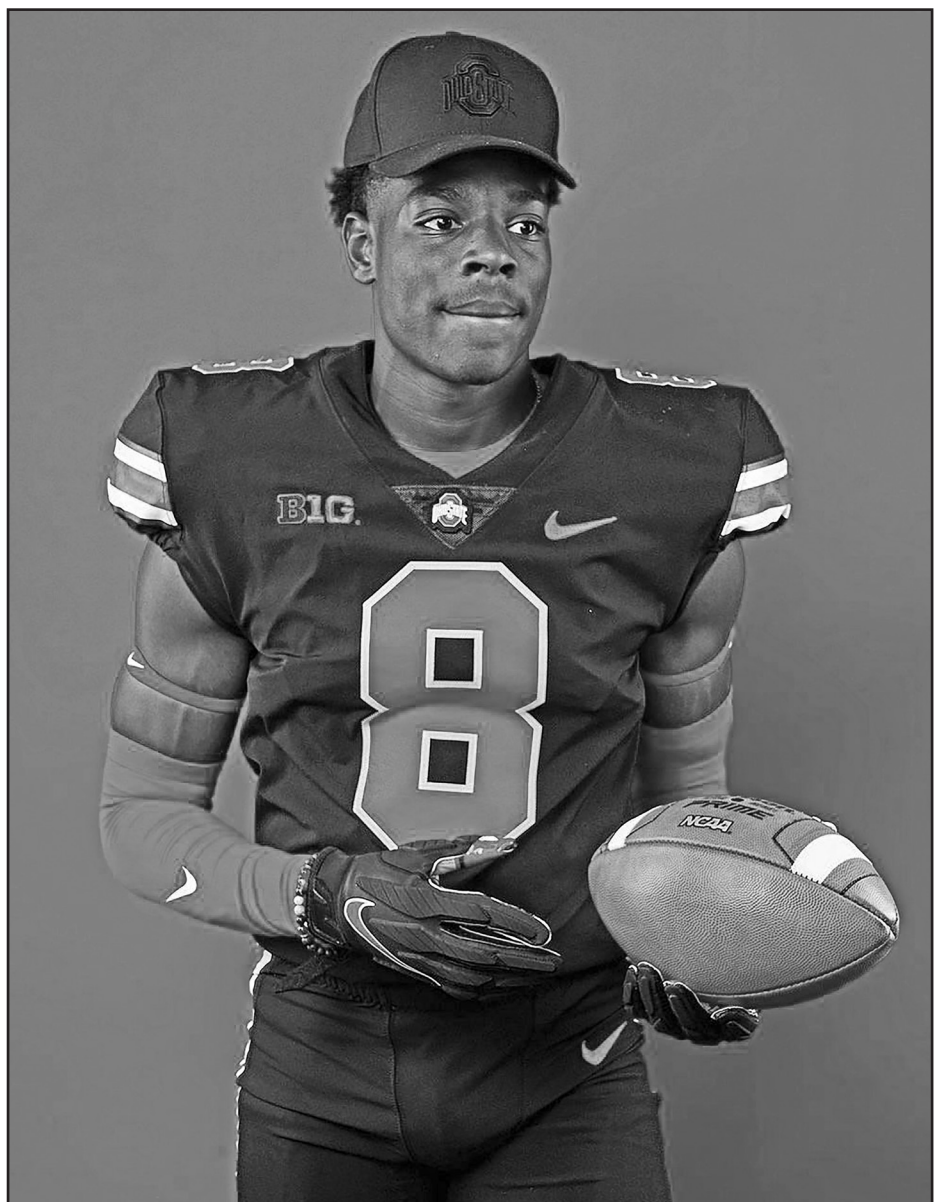


PHOTO VIA TERRANCE BROOKS

JOINING THE FRAY – Little Elm, Texas, four-star cornerback Terrance Brooks surprised many when he spurned in-state suitors Texas and Texas A&M and committed to Ohio State.

Smoke in Ohio State's favor surfaced just hours before the commitment when the Buckeyes earned a pair of crystal ball predictions for Brooks on 247Sports. He took one of his five official visits to Ohio State but also traveled to Oregon, Florida, Texas and Alabama (in that order) in June. He picked up an offer from the Buckeyes just a week earlier on June 14, with Ohio State defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs spearheading the recruiting effort.

Brooks is the No. 58 player in the nation and the No. 8 defensive back. He's the No. 13 player in the state of Texas, giving Ohio State three top-15 players from the Lone Star state, along with Southlake Carroll five-star quarterback Quinn Ewers (No. 1) and Austin Lake Travis five-star Caleb Burton (No. 9). The Buckeyes would love to make it four with the addition of Duncanville five-star defensive lineman Omari Abor (No. 6), who currently has three crystal ball predictions in favor of Oklahoma.

The 5-11, 190-pound cornerback is the fourth defensive back and cornerback in Ohio State's class, joining five-star Jacksonville (Fla.) Robert E. Lee prospect Jaheim Singletary, West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Jyaire Brown and Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep three-star Ryan Turner.

Seffner (Fla.) Armwood three-star athlete Kye Stokes is also expected to land in the secondary, meaning that Ohio State will likely look to land just two safeties to close out the defensive back class. Des Moines (Iowa) Southeast Polk four-star Xavier Nwankpa and Las Vegas Bishop Gorman four-star Zion Branch appear the favorites to fill those spots.

Hayden Gives Bucks A Running Back For 2022 Class

Memphis (Tenn.) Christian Brothers four-star running back Dallan Hayden announced on June 22 that he would be committing to Ohio State. Hayden chose the Buckeyes from a top four that also included Notre Dame, Oregon and Tennessee.

Hayden is ranked the No. 24 running back and No. 237 prospect overall in the 2022 class and had previously been considered a favorite to go to the in-state Volunteers. But Hayden earned his first crystal ball prediction for the Buckeyes on April 13 from 247Sports director of recruiting Steve Wiltfong, and the momentum grew for Ohio State from there.

Hayden was offered by Ohio State on Aug. 25, 2020, and becomes the first running back commitment for the Buckeyes in the 2022 class. This comes after Ohio State earned a pair of commitments at the position for 2021 in TreVeyon Henderson and Evan Pryor.

Greene said he believes Hayden is a do-it-all running back who works better with what head coach Ryan Day is implementing into the offense compared to previous Ohio State schemes.

"The thing that stands out to me about him is he can do everything," Greene said. "And I don't think he does any one thing amazing. I don't think he's a blazer, but he's definitely not slow. He's not the biggest guy in the world, but he's not a little guy. I mean he can catch the ball, he can run inside, he can run outside, so I think he fits the Ryan Day offense better than he would Urban Meyer. I don't think Urban would have taken him in that offense, but I think he fits in Ryan Day's offense."

Greene also said that Hayden is coming



PHOTO VIA DALLAN HAYDEN

THE ONE – Memphis Christian Brothers four-star running back Dallan Hayden (right) is likely to be the only player at his position in Ohio State's 2022 class.

into a highly competitive position group that expects to stay competitive for the near future. With that in mind, it is important for Hayden to not only be well-versed, but to be able to stand out and find a way onto the field.

"He's going to be competing against TreVeyon Henderson, Evan Pryor, and they likely bring two (running backs) in next year," Greene said. "He's going to

have to separate himself from those guys, no differently than when we look at Marcus Crowley and Miyan Williams. You're in a battle there with a bunch of guys, and you have to find a way to separate yourself.

"Can Dallan Hayden turn himself into Trey Sermon? If he does, then he doesn't

Continued On Page 34

ASK AN ANALYST

With Bill Greene of Buckeye Scoop

Ohio State earned a commitment from is Memphis (Tenn.) Christian Brothers four-star running back Dallan Hayden. Do you think Hayden will be the lone running back commitment for the Buckeyes in the 2022 class?

"I do think he will be it. I think they feel really good about 2023. There's Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic four-star Justice Haynes, Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy five-star Treyaun Webb, Lehigh Acres (Fla.) Lehigh Senior five-star Richard Young, the kid out of Texas who just decommitted recently (El Campo, Texas five-star Rueben Owens). They're going to take two and get two studs next year, and I think they just hold the line this year.

"They took two last year, so when you start stacking up, taking two every year, you're just putting guys in the portal at that point. And you have all these running backs on the roster right now, and every one of them could return next year or two at Ohio State. I think they take one this year, and then go all in to get two the studs next year."

Ohio State does not yet have a commitment for the 2023 class. When are you expecting the focus to shift more toward that class, and is there any reason to be concerned about the slower pace of that class?

"I don't think there's any concern at all. The COVID situation just ruined so much of recruiting, and they're putting so much right now into this 2022 class with all these official visits that we've never seen before. Official visits and camps happening every other day. This is a weird year right now, so I don't have any reservations about the 2023 class.

"Ohio State has shown how it can recruit, and then you look at the kids that they'd had on campus in June for

2023. There's a lot of stars there, and I think the 2023 kids, they've been locked down for a year, and I think these kids are enjoying being able to go out and visit these schools.

"I think it will pick back up once the season starts, but I think for now, these schools are so focused on 2022 and these official visits. And then I think there's going to be a lot of commitments coming in July from the 2022 kids, and then a lot of the focus will turn to 2023. But I think Ohio State is set up in 2023 with just the guys I've seen on campus in June, I think they're set up to have a heck of a class again."

Who is a prospect who has potentially flown under the radar or shone at the training camps you have been able to see in person?

"I wouldn't say he is under the radar, but Findlay, Ohio, 2023 four-star offensive tackle Luke Montgomery surprised me. He's highly on the radar, and everybody talks about him and everybody loves him, but nobody's really seen him play the position he's going to play in college, which is offensive tackle. He's been a tight end, he's been at defensive end.

"So, the other day I cautioned people to not get your expectations up too high because he's going to be playing a position that he really hasn't learned yet. It's his position, three years from now. It hasn't been his position yet. And there he is going against four- and five-star D-ends that have played their position all their lives. So, you know, show some caution here, but he was good. He was really good. I was surprised by him.

"He would make a mistake in the drills or in the one-on-ones, and (offensive line coach) Greg Studrawa or (offensive coordinator) Kevin Wilson would grab him and explain

to him what he did wrong. And he would go right back out there and then, whether it was the next drill or the next rep, he would apply what they told him to do, and it would work.

"So that was the thing that was probably the most surprising thing to me was how good he was playing at the position he hasn't played yet and blocking the caliber of kids that he had to block. That was probably one of the most surprising things I saw the whole month."

Ohio State had a surprise recruiting loss in 2021 Cheshire (Conn.) Academy four-star edge rusher Wilfredo Aybar, who instead committed to Stanford. How big a surprise was that to you, and how major a loss is that for the Buckeyes?

"It was very surprising to me. I thought, and they thought, they pretty much had that one locked up. I was shocked by that. It's a loss because I think they were going to put him back in 2021, and then get him in early and get him up to speed weight-wise and speed-wise with (defensive line coach) Larry Johnson and (director of sport performance) Mickey Marotti.

"I think they need speed rushers, I really do. Even in this 2022 class right now, I mean is Marysville, Ohio, four-star linebacker Gabe Powers at the end? Is he not? I don't know. Now they're looking at guys like Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep four-star Kenyatta Jackson. I think they need a speed rushing defensive end, and I think Aybar would have been that.

"We'll see where they go. I mean I think it's a loss, but I don't think it's an end-of-the-world kind of loss. He's someone they can replace."

Buckeyes Miss On Pair Of DL Targets

Continued From Page 33

have to worry about Henderson or these other guys. But that's what he's going to have to do. You come to Ohio State or Alabama, you're going to have to separate yourself from those dudes somehow because there are going to be guys that are ahead of you and guys coming in behind you."

OSU Loses On Some Big Names

Although Ohio State experienced some big wins on the recruiting trail since BSB last went to press, there were also a handful of losses, some of which came as a big surprise.

One of those major surprises came on June 23, when Ohio State missed out on a potential reclassification target in Cheshire (Conn.) Academy four-star Wilfredo Aybar. The 6-4, 240-pound linebacker announced that he would be jumping into the 2021 class at Stanford, rather than Ohio State. He had a trio of crystal ball selections at 247Sports, all of which slotted him in Ohio State's class with seven confidence points.

Aybar was ranked No. 164 nationally and No. 9 in his position by 247Sports, but that was at edge and in the class of 2022. In Stanford's 3-4 defense, he'll slot instead as an outside linebacker and plans to enroll immediately to play as a freshman this upcoming season. He would have done the same had he picked Ohio State, where he visited June 11, but likely would have landed at that original edge rusher spot.

Without Aybar, Ohio State's 2021 class remains at the four defensive linemen who signed during the early signing period: Sawyer; Manassas (Va.) Unity Reed four-star defensive tackle Tyleik Williams; and Streetsboro, Ohio, four-star tackle Mike Hall.

One who was less surprising was Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star defensive end Jihaad Campbell committing to Clemson on June 27. He had a top



PHOTO VIA BRENNAN VERNON

HEADING WEST – Mentor, Ohio, five-star defensive end Brennan Vernon (center) surprised many when he announced his commitment to Notre Dame.

eight that included the Tigers, along with Florida, Georgia, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Penn State, Rutgers and Texas A&M.

Campbell ranks as the seventh-best edge rusher and the No. 143 overall prospect in the 2022 class. He had taken visits to Florida, Clemson, Ohio State, Rutgers and Georgia in that order since the recruiting dead period ended at the start of June.

The 6-3, 215-pound Campbell had been a Clemson lean heading into the decision and was given one crystal ball in favor of the Tigers on June 25 by 247's Wiltfong.

The commitment of Campbell gives Clemson eight commitments for its class,

ranking No. 17 in the 247Sports rankings. He is the second-best commitment in the class thus far, behind only Austin (Texas) Westlake four-star quarterback Cade Klubnik.

St. Louis Lutheran North four-star cornerback Toriano Pride announced his commitment to Clemson on June 18. He had a top seven that included Clemson, along with Alabama, Auburn, Georgia, Missouri, Ohio State and Oregon.

Pride is the No. 23 cornerback and No. 187 prospect overall in the 2022 class. He visited Ohio State on June 4, but it was not enough to sway his decision. At 5-11, 172,

Pride was compared to Miami Dolphins corner Noah Igbinochene by 247Sports' Andrew Ivins.

The recruiting win for the Tigers comes after a prior loss in the secondary to the Buckeyes. The previously mentioned Ryan Turner committed to Ohio State over Clemson, another finalist, back on May 5. Pride was Clemson's seventh commitment of the 2022 class and put the Tigers at No. 23 in the 247Sports recruit rankings at the time of his commitment before Campbell jumped them even further.

Finally, the most surprising defeat on the trail came back inside the home state. Mentor, Ohio, five-star defensive lineman Brennan Vernon, who was a major favorite to land with Ohio State for nearly a year, ultimately decided to take his talents out of state and commit to Notre Dame on June 29.

Vernon is ranked the sixth-best defensive linemen and No. 18 overall prospect in the 2023 class and held an offer from the Buckeyes since Aug. 15, 2020. That was around the time Vernon earned five crystal ball predictions, all in favor of Ohio State and all with confidence levels ranging from 7-9, all of which are labeled as "HIGH" confidence.

The 6-5, 245-pound prospect had held an offer from the Fighting Irish since Jan. 31, 2020, and after a visit to South Bend, Ind., on June 6, the program had enough impact to sway the previous momentum.

Vernon joins a former Buckeye, Marcus Freeman, who joined the Fighting Irish as defensive coordinator this past offseason after a very successful stint as defensive coordinator at Cincinnati under another former Ohio State player, Bearcats head coach Luke Fickell.

With Vernon's commitment, Ohio State misses out on an in-state five-star prospect for the first time since 2018, when offensive tackle Jackson Carman chose to go to Clemson over the Buckeyes. Ohio State is also fighting Notre Dame for the other five-star in-state prospect in 2023: Pickerington

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Central safety Sonny Styles.

Styles is the son of former Ohio State linebacker Lorenzo Styles Sr. but is the brother of wide receiver Lorenzo Styles Jr., who signed with Notre Dame in the 2021 class. Currently, Sonny Styles has one crystal ball prediction in favor of the Fighting Irish.

Buckeyes Make Top Schools For Variety Of Prospects

With recruiting visits being back for more than a month, Ohio State has found itself on a variety of players' top schools lists.

Although it is not the most winnowed list, Findlay, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Luke Montgomery included the Buckeyes in his top 12 schools on June 29, along with Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Penn State, South Carolina, Stanford and Tennessee.

Montgomery is a key in-state target for Ohio State, ranking as the fifth-best offensive tackle and No. 53 overall prospect in the 2023 class. As mentioned, the Buckeyes have already suffered one in-state loss with Vernon, so locking down the 6-5, 260-pound Montgomery, who is ranked the third-best Ohio prospect for the class, is a major priority.

The Findlay product visited the Buckeyes for camps on June 1 and June 22. Currently, Montgomery has one crystal

ball prediction, from 247Sports Ohio State insider Bill Kurelic, that is in favor of the Buckeyes.

Buford, Ga. three-star safety Jake Pope had Ohio State in his top five schools on June 28, joining Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Notre Dame.

Pope is ranked the No. 27 safety and No. 385 overall prospect in the 2022 class. He visited the Buckeyes on June 18, along with a pair of 2022 commits in Hayden and Kettering (Ohio) Alter five-star linebacker C.J. Hicks. He was also joined by priority targets Antwi and Tuimolou.

While the recruitment battle is far from over, the 6-1, 190-pound Pope may currently be a lean toward the Fighting Irish. That is where Notre Dame insider Tom Loy's crystal ball prediction, the lone prediction for Pope, favors.

On June 30, Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star wide receiver Carnell Tate put Ohio State in his top 10 schools, along with Florida State, Illinois, LSU, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ole Miss, Penn State, Tennessee and Texas.

Tate is rated the fifth-best receiver and No. 42 overall prospect in the 2023 class. He received an offer from the Buckeyes on April 23, where, in a tweet, he called Ohio State his "dream school." He also was at Ohio State camps on both June 8 and 22.

The Buckeyes are considered a front-runner for the 6-2, 185-pound receiver. But, like many other current battles, it

appears that Ohio State's main competition may lie with Notre Dame. There are only two crystal ball predictions for Tate: one for the Buckeyes and one for the Fighting Irish. The good news for Ohio State fans is that Wiltfong's Buckeye prediction is much more recent, occurring on June 8 compared to Loy's Notre Dame prediction from Sept. 1, 2020.

Philadelphia St. Joseph's four-star linebacker Josiah Trotter included Ohio State in his top four schools, along with Clemson, Penn State and South Carolina on June 14.

Trotter, who is listed at 6-2, 225, is ranked the No. 11 linebacker and No. 121 overall prospect in the 2023 class. There are no crystal ball predictions for him at the time of publishing.

The four-star linebacker, who played at the same school as 2021 Ohio State signees Marvin Harrison and Kyle McCord, also has some NFL lineage in his family. His father is former All-Pro linebacker Jeremiah Trotter, who went to Stephen F. Austin before going to four Pro Bowls and entering the Philadelphia Eagles Hall of Fame.

Trotter took an unofficial visit to Ohio State on June 7, along with fellow 2023 Ohio State targets Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic four-star running back Justice Haynes and Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Academy five-star athlete Treyaun Webb.

Speaking of Webb, he included Ohio

State in his top three schools, along with Georgia and Oklahoma on June 23. He also said that these will be the three schools he chooses from when he makes his decision in August on CBS Sports.

Webb is ranked the third-best athlete and No. 34 overall prospect in the class. He has an 11.26-second 100-meter dash time and has also shone in track in high school, becoming a Jacksonville.com All First-Coast honorable mention last year.

The 6-0, 188-pound Webb is likely to play running back at the next level. He followed his unofficial visit to OSU with a pair of unofficial visits to both of the other finalists, first going to Georgia on June 15 and then Oklahoma on June 18.

Webb was a previous commit for the Bulldogs but decommitted back on Jan. 9. The Buckeyes had an offer out to him months prior on Aug. 1, 2020.

Ohio State appears to have Webb as one of its top running back targets for 2023. The others are Haynes and Leigh Acres (Fla.) Leigh Senior five-star Richard Young. Young visited the Buckeyes for a camp on June 8, just a day after both Haynes and Webb.

Patrick Mayhorn also contributed to this article.

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

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1986

Harrisburg, Pa., running back James Bryant received a phone call during the fall of his senior season of high school, a year that had seen him burst into the recruiting landscape and placed him firmly on Ohio State's radar. Because of his strong performance on the field, it wasn't uncommon for that phone to ring, but Bryant was taken aback when a family member told him that Archie Griffin, Ohio State's two-time Heisman Trophy winner, was on the line.

In fact, he didn't believe it until he heard the man himself. "I thought it was one of my friends playing around," Bryant told BSB in June. "My friends used to call up and say, 'This is the USC coach, this is the Penn State coach,' things like that, just playing around. So I didn't believe it."

But Bryant, a 6-0, 212-pound running back, despite his trepidation, took the call.

"It didn't sound like any of my friends," said Bryant. "I was really stunned when I found out it was Archie."

The incident did the trick. Bryant was already leaning toward signing with Ohio State, but his call and a later visit with Griffin helped to seal the deal.

"It was always kind of in the back of my head that I wanted to play for Ohio State – if I got the chance," said Bryant. "Then when I made my visit down there, I got to meet him. That's all it took."

30 Years Ago – 1991

Ohio State's 1991 football recruiting effort, thought to be all sewn up in February, may not have been finished quite yet after all.

The Buckeyes' class of 19 incoming freshmen looked like it could increase to an even 20 with the signing of lineman Dan Wilkinson of Dayton Dunbar.

Wilkinson told BSB in late June that he would sign a national letter of intent to play football for the Buckeyes on July 10 or 11.

He was one of the most highly sought linemen in the country in the fall prior until it appeared he would not be able to qualify for freshman eligibility under Proposition 42. However, he achieved a passing score on the ACT on his final attempt at taking the test, likely making him eligible to play in the fall.

"I decided a couple of weeks ago that it would be Ohio State," the 6-6, 295-pounder said. "It came down to them and Tennessee. Basically, it was because it was close to home and (OSU track team member) Chris (Nelloms, also from Dayton Dunbar) told me that it was a good school."

25 Years Ago – 1996

Ohio State spent a good portion of the month of June welcoming as many as 1,200 youngsters into the Woody Hayes Athletic Center for four sessions of camp.

The early recruiting benefits were negligible with Ohio State

netting just one verbal commitment as of press time, that coming from Westerville (Ohio) South defensive back David Mitchell. However, the camp gave the OSU staff a chance to see many of Ohio's and the nation's best high school players.

"This is our largest turnout ever," said OSU recruiting coordinator Bill Conley. "I think that is due in part to the success we've had and the exposure we've had. Plus, word has gotten out that we recruited a lot of players from our camp last year."

"This year, about 25 percent of the players we had in camp are high school seniors. This gives us a great look at a lot of the talent from Ohio as well as from other parts of the country."

20 Years Ago – 2001

As BSB was going to press, it was learned that Kettering (Ohio) Alter offensive lineman Nick Mangold had verbally committed to the Buckeyes.

The 6-4, 267-pound Mangold gave OSU 11 verbal commitments in the Class of 2002, including four on the offensive line, which was a major point of emphasis in new head coach Jim Tressel's first full class.

Mangold picked Ohio State over Notre Dame.

"I can't say that one thing was the main factor," said Mangold, who was offered by both of his final schools after camp showings in June. "Ohio State is just a better fit all around for me."

"And (offensive line coach Jim) Bollman is really the kind of line coach I like. He knows what he is talking about. I just wanted to get this out of the way and concentrate on my senior season."

15 Years Ago – 2006

As expected, the second of Ohio State's Senior Advanced Camps, held June 23, was the higher profile of the two. More highly regarded prospects were in attendance at the second advanced camp, and more players earned scholarship offers following their performances at the camp.

However, as BSB went to press in early July, the Buckeyes' only new verbal commitment had come 10 days before their second advanced camp. On June 13, Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne defensive back Donnie Ewege finally pulled the trigger on his college decision, committing to OSU while on an unofficial visit to the university.

"I chose Ohio State for a lot of reasons," Ewege told BSB. "It meets all my needs as a person and a student-athlete. The tradition is the best. I enjoy the coaching staff. I think I fit in well there. It's just the best decision for me."

A 5-11, 185-pounder with 40-yard dash times in the 4.3-second range, Ewege was offered by the Buckeyes in December of 2005 and since then had maintained that the Buckeyes were the leaders for his services.

10 Years Ago – 2011

Shortly after co-defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Luke Fickell was named the head coach for the 2011 season after Jim Tressel's resignation, he found himself on the phone with Kyle Kalis. The 6-5, 305-pound lineman from Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward was calling to let the new coach know that he would be withdrawing the verbal commitment to the program he had delivered Sept. 18, 2010.

Forty-five minutes later, Fickell had so thoroughly convinced Kalis to stick with the Buckeyes that he told reporters he would only hold true to his commitment if Fickell was named the program's permanent head coach.

Once the heat of the moment died down, however, Kalis decided two weeks later that it was time to decommit.

"I want to keep all my options open and will consider several programs going forward, including Ohio State," he told BSB on June 21. "That's really all I want to say about my recruitment at this time."

Five Years Ago – 2016

Already flush with a dozen commits, who made up the No. 1 class in the country, the Buckeyes added a pair of five-star prospects to their class of 2017 in June. Las Vegas Bishop Gorman quarterback Tate Martell (the No. 1 QB and No. 14 overall prospect) pledged June 12, and Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco offensive guard Wyatt Davis (the No. 2 offensive guard and No. 24 overall prospect) committed to OSU on June 24.

As of June 30, Ohio State had three five-stars, 10 four-stars and one three-star – Buffalo (N.Y.) Canisius kicker Blake Haubeil. Half of the 14 commits were ranked in the top five at their position.

Davis joined Arvada (Colo.) Pomona four-star offensive tackle Jake Moretti and Miamisburg, Ohio, five-star offensive tackle Josh Myers in Ohio State's offensive line class.

One Year Ago – 2020

Ohio State suffered its first decommitment in the class of 2021 on June 25 when Cincinnati La Salle three-star cornerback Devonta Smith announced on Twitter that he was reopening his recruitment. He then committed to Alabama just four days later.

The 6-0, 185-pound Smith – who was considered the 30th-best cornerback and No. 403 prospect overall in his class – landed an offer from defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs on March 12 and pledged his services to the Buckeyes on March 16.

A source close to Smith indicated his concern about there being too many defensive backs in the class, as there were five alongside Smith at the time of his decommitment, including a pair of cornerbacks in Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro four-star Denzel Burke and St. Louis De Smet Jesuit four-star Jakailin Johnson.

Schembechler's Son Says Bo Knew Of Abuse

The son of the late Michigan football coach Bo Schembechler alleged that he was sexually abused by a former team doctor being investigated by the university, and that his father knew and did nothing.

Matt Schembechler, 62, said he first visited Dr. Robert Anderson before playing fourth-grade football in 1969. Anderson "fondled my genitalia and conducted an

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

invasive rectal exam," the son said.

The son of the renowned coach told his mother about the exam, and she told him to talk to his adoptive father about the situation, but Bo did not want to hear the allegations.

"Bo's temper was legendary, and he lost it," Matt Schembechler said. "I tried to tell him repeatedly, but my effort earned me a punch in the chest. This was the beginning of the end of the relationship. ... I hoped my father would protect me, but he didn't."

Matt and his mother reported Anderson's behavior to athletic director Don Canham, who terminated Anderson, but it is the son's understanding that his father had Anderson reinstated, he said.

When speaking with reporters, Matt Schembechler was joined by two previously anonymous former Michigan players, Daniel Kwiatkowski and Gilvanni Johnson, who were cited in a report commissioned by Michigan that found the university received hundreds of allegations about Anderson – across decades – and failed to act, attorney Mick Grewal said. The former players said they told Bo Schembechler of Anderson's abuse.

The former student-athletes' allegations have similarities to some of those in the 240-page report laid out in May by the law firm WilmerHale, which alleges Anderson was moved from University Health Services to the athletic department in 1981 after Thomas Easthope, assistant vice president of student services, received "credible reports of misconduct" in 1978 or 1979.

An alleged victim told the firm that Easthope had conveyed to him that Anderson would stop seeing patients, but Anderson "continued to provide medical services to student-athletes and other patients – and to engage in sexual misconduct with large numbers of them" until his retirement, according to the report. Easthope told investigators he had fired Anderson, "but Mr. Easthope did not do so," the report said. Easthope died in February of this year.

One of the players who spoke out, Johnson, mentioned hearing about "Dr. Anal" when he arrived in Ann Arbor as a freshman in 1982, but he did not understand what it meant until his first visit.

Johnson described an exam that was similar to the one Matt Schembechler had said he endured. Johnson visited Anderson for colds, injuries and other matters at least 15 times during his four years at Michigan and the doctor fondled his penis and gave him rectal exams each time, he said. According to Johnson, everyone knew about the doctor's abuse and players and coaches discussed it regularly.

"Coaches used to joke about him and



PHOTO COURTESY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

EXPLORING HIS OPTIONS – Illinois first-team All-Big Ten center Kofi Cockburn, who previously put his name in the NBA draft, has also entered the transfer portal.

actually threatened (a) Dr. Anderson exam if (they) did not think we were working hard enough," Johnson said. "Only now do I realize how crazy it was to threaten rape as a way of motivating players to work harder."

Kwiatkowski, who played for the Maize and Blue from 1977-81, said he suffered the same abuse, adding that Anderson once blew on his penis and told him it was OK to get an erection.

According to Kwiatkowski, Bo Schembechler had promised his mother that he would treat the young man like family, so he was surprised by his coach's reaction when he reported Anderson.

"Bo looked at me and said, 'Toughen up,'" Kwiatkowski said, and sent him back for three more exams with Anderson, who "violated me again and again."

Former Wolverine wrestler Thomas DeLuca went to the university in 2018 to share a report of alleged abuse by Anderson, who he said, "examined his penis, did a hernia check and conducted a digital rectal examination without explaining why such examinations were necessary."

In 1975, DeLuca told his coach of the abuse, which had begun three years earlier, DeLuca said. According to the former wrestler, he lost his scholarship and was kicked off the team. Two more Michigan wrestlers, including Olympian Andy Hrovat, sat alongside DeLuca at a news conference in 2020, detailing their own allegations of abuse. Former San Francisco 49ers and Indianapolis Colts safety Dwight Hicks also came forward with allegations later that year.

Chuck Christian, who played tight end

at Michigan from 1977-81, told CNN in May 2020 that he was abused by Anderson as well and that the doctor's unnecessary rectal exams stopped him from seeing physicians later in life.

Johnson and Kwiatkowski said they also became wary of doctors. Kwiatkowski jeopardized his own health, and Johnson delayed important health care because of his distrust. Christian is now battling prostate cancer, which he said might have been diagnosed earlier if not for his fear of physicians.

On the other side, Bo's biological son Glenn defended his father vehemently.

"I can tell you unequivocally no one ever told Bo," Glenn Schembechler said. "Bo would have done something."

Current Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh also stood up for his former coach.

"There was nothing that I saw the times that I was a kid here – my dad was on the staff – or when I played here," Harbaugh said. "He never sat on anything. He never procrastinated on anything. He took care of it before the sun went down. That's the Bo Schembechler that I know. There was nothing that ever was swept under the rug or ignored."

According to the WilmerHale report, many of the former student-athletes abused by Anderson were members of susceptible populations – including LGBTQ patients, student-athletes vying for scholarships and patients seeking medical exemptions from the Vietnam War – and "felt they had little choice but to abide Dr. Anderson's abuse."

Some of the alleged victims quit their teams, while others questioned their sexu-

ality, sought counseling or dropped out of school, according to the report, concluding, "The trauma that Dr. Anderson's misconduct caused persists to this day."

Illinois' Cockburn Enters Portal

Illinois standout center Kofi Cockburn entered the transfer portal after entering his name into the NBA draft earlier in the offseason.

The 7-2 center has not ruled out a return to Illinois, but he wants to keep his options open. Cockburn could be one of the biggest names in college basketball to transfer in several years, coming off a first-team All-Big Ten season during which he averaged 17.7 points, 9.5 rebounds and 1.3 blocks per game.

The sophomore from Kingston, Jamaica, shot 65.4 percent from the floor and recorded 16 double-doubles in 31 games in the 2020-21 season, helping lead the Illini to a Big Ten tournament title and a top seed in the NCAA Tournament before they lost in the second round to Loyola Chicago.

If Cockburn, who was a consensus second-team All-American, decides to leave Champaign, Kentucky could be in the mix after hiring assistant coaches Chin Coleman and Orlando Antigua from Illinois this offseason.

Cockburn, who averaged 13.3 points, 8.8 boards, and 1.4 blocks as a true freshman in 2019-20, is ranked No. 96 in ESPN's NBA draft rankings for 2021.

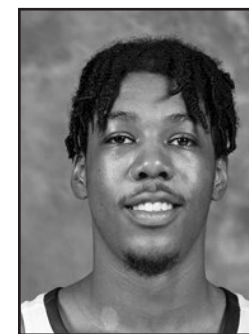
Carr Withdraws From Draft, Could Still Leave Minnesota

Minnesota standout guard Marcus Carr withdrew his name from the NBA draft, but whether he will return to the Gophers remains in question.

Carr entered the transfer portal in March before entering his name into the draft process, and the third-team All-Big Ten guard will still consider transferring.

The Toronto native averaged 19.4 points, 4.0 rebounds and 4.9 assists per game in a 2020-21 campaign when he scored 30 or more points on four occasions.

He was the No. 1 transfer in ESPN's transfer rankings before entering the draft process and returned to the top following his withdrawal from the draft.



Marcus Carr

Nebraska AD Moos Retires

Nebraska athletic director Bill Moos announced on June 25 that he would be retiring after four seasons working with the Cornhuskers.

Moos' contract was set to expire after the 2022 football season, but he decided that he would be retiring starting on June 30 at the age of 70.

"To understand just how special Nebraska is, you need to spend time here, meet our people, visit our cities and towns and sit in Memorial Stadium in a sea of red on a Saturday afternoon in the fall," Moos said. "I step away completely content, knowing that our athletic program is reborn

Editor's Notebook

Continued From Page 3

When the sun sets on the mountains behind the Rose Bowl, it is an awesome site. And nowhere other than Husky Stadium can you watch fans ferry over by boat to watch a game.

"For sheer historic value, I'll take the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. To watch a game inside a venue that has hosted two Summer Olympics as well as a pair of Super Bowls and a World Series – that pretty much speaks for itself."

BSB: What are some of the most memorable games that you've covered?

Rea: "Again, that is a long list. The 2002 Michigan game is a tough one to beat. I will never forget watching Craig Krenzler carried to the Ohio Stadium locker room on a sea of scarlet. Then, of course, is the 2014 national championship game at AT&T Stadium in Texas. That place is an absolute football palace, and watching the Buckeyes outclass Oregon from start to finish was

especially enjoyable.

"There was the 2006 heavyweight title fight between No. 1 Ohio State and No. 2 Michigan. I only begrudgingly give Michigan credit for anything, but that team was down by double digits at three separate junctures of that game and simply wouldn't quit.

"Speaking of refusing to quit, I was on the sideline for the 1989 game at Minnesota when the Buckeyes fell behind by a 31-0 score before coming all the way back for a 41-37 victory. At the time, it was the biggest deficit ever overcome in college football history and was one of the first signature wins in Coop's tenure.

"More recently, there was the Penn State game in 2017 during which J.T. Barrett put on a fourth-quarter show like no other in my memory. Barrett was a perfect 13 for 13 in the fourth quarter for 170 yards and three touchdowns, and the Buckeyes erased an 11-point deficit in the final five minutes for a 39-38 victory. I have rewatched that game several times and still wonder how Ohio State managed to win it. I'm sure James Franklin wonders the same thing."

and rebuilt, and that it has a solid, stable foundation."

While at Nebraska, Moos made hires for both of Nebraska's major programs, signing Scott Frost as head football coach and Fred Hoiberg as men's basketball head coach.

Prior to his time in Lincoln, Moos had experience as athletic director at Montana (1990-95), Oregon (1995-2007) and Washington State (2010-17). He was also a former offensive tackle at Washington State from 1969-72, where he got his start in administration as an assistant athletic director from 1982-87.

"I have been so fortunate to work as the Director of Athletics at four wonderful schools and have seen a lot, but I have never witnessed and experienced the passion of fans like we have at Nebraska," Moos said. "The unflinching support of our programs and of our university is inspiring and unmatched. I have visited every part of our great state and engaged

with thousands of Husker fans over the years, and there truly is no place like Nebraska."

Former Husker McCaffrey Leaves Louisville For Rice

Former Nebraska quarterback Luke McCaffrey, who left the Huskers for Louisville in late February, announced he will join his third team in less than a year by transferring to Rice.

McCaffrey appeared in seven games at Nebraska, including two starts, as a redshirt freshman in 2020. The dual-threat quarterback threw for 466 yards and one touchdown and rushed for 364 yards and three scores, while splitting time with usual starter Adrian Martinez.

McCaffrey's first career start ended in a 30-23 victory on Nov. 14 against Penn State, but he struggled the next week with three interceptions in a 41-23 loss to Illinois.

After entering the transfer portal in



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

ON THE MOVE – Luke McCaffrey has moved to his third school of the offseason, jumping from Louisville to Rice after previously going from Nebraska to the Cardinals.

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

2021 FOOTBALL

Sept. 2 at Minnesota; 11 OREGON; 18 TULSA; 25 AKRON.

Oct. 2 at Rutgers; 9 MARYLAND; 23 at Indiana; 30 PENN STATE.

Nov. 6 at Nebraska; 13 PURDUE; 20 MICHIGAN STATE; 27 at Michigan.

Dec. 4 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

2022 FOOTBALL

Sept. 3 NOTRE DAME; 10 ARKANSAS STATE; 17 TOLEDO; 24 at Michigan State.

Oct. 1 at Penn State; 8 RUTGERS; 15 IOWA; 29 INDIANA.

Nov. 5 at Northwestern; 12 WISCONSIN; 19 at Maryland; 26 MICHIGAN.

Dec. 3 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

2023 FOOTBALL

Sept. 2 at Indiana; 9 SAN JOSE STATE; 16 WESTERN KENTUCKY; 23 at Notre Dame.

Oct. 7 MARYLAND; 14 at Purdue; 21 PENN STATE; 28 at Wisconsin.

Nov. 4 at Rutgers; 11 MICHIGAN STATE; 18 MINNESOTA; 25 at Michigan.

Dec. 2 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

MEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

March 27 at Maryland, NTS.

April 2-3 at North Florida, NTS; 9 at Indiana, NTS; 16-17 Husker B1G Invite at

Dallas, Texas, NTS; 16 at Indiana at Indiana, NTS; 23-24 Fighting Illini Big Ten Relays at Champaign, Ill., NTS; 30-May 1 Jesse Owens Invitational Columbus, Ohio, NTS.

May 14 Big Ten Championships at Champaign, Ill. 8TH/8 PTS; 15 Big Ten Championships at Champaign, Ill. 11TH/10 PTS.; 16 Big Ten Championships at Champaign, Ill., 5TH/71 PTS; 26 NCAA East Prelims at Jacksonville, Fla., NTS; 28 NCAA East Prelims at Jacksonville, Fla., NTS.

June 9 NCAA Championships at Eugene, Org., NTS; 11 NCAA Championships at Eugene, Org., T57TH / 2 PTS.

WOMEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

March 27 at Maryland, NTS.

April 2-3 at North Florida, NTS; 9 at Indiana, NTS; 16-17 Husker B1G Invite at Dallas, Texas, NTS; 16 at Indiana at Indiana, NTS; 23-24 Fighting Illini Big Ten Relays at Champaign, Ill., NTS; 30-May 1 Jesse Owens Invitational Columbus, Ohio, NTS.

May 14 Big Ten Championships at Champaign, Ill. 3RD/18PTS; 15 Big Ten Championships at Champaign, Ill. 2ND/36 PTS; 16 Big Ten Championships at Champaign, Ill., 1ST/117PTS; 27 NCAA East Prelims at Jacksonville, Fla. NTS; 29 NCAA East Prelims at Jacksonville, Fla., NTS.

June 10 NCAA Championships at Eugene, Org., T3RD / 13 PTS.; 12 NCAA Championships at Eugene, Org., T11TH/19 PTS.

January, McCaffrey chose to take his talents to Louisville a month later. He was expected to compete with returning starter Malik Cunningham for the Cardinals' starting signal-caller job, but he decided to enter the portal after it became clear he would not be the starter, according to Louisville head coach Scott Satterfield.

On the other hand, Rice has been searching for a replacement at quarterback following the departure of Mike Collins.

Minnesota's Football Stadium Undergoes Name Change

The University of Minnesota Board of Regents approved the renaming of TCF Bank Stadium – the Gophers' football stadium – to Huntington Bank Stadium.

"We are excited to partner with Huntington Bank and are excited to play in Huntington Bank Stadium this season and beyond," Minnesota director of athletics Mark Coyle. "This partnership will allow Gopher Athletics to continue to strive for greatness and focus on the success of our student-athletes. We look forward to Huntington's growing presence in the Twin Cities and across the region and are thrilled to open the 2021 football season in Huntington Bank Stadium."

Huntington completed its merger with TCF in June of 2021. Minnesota has played under the TCF Bank Stadium name since 2009. The Gophers' first game at its renamed stadium will be on Thursday, Sept. 2 against Ohio State.

Buckeye Sports BulletinBoard

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Playoff A Welcome Change To College Football

Finally, an idea that makes sense for college football: a 12-team playoff that includes automatic bids tied to conference championships and plenty of room for at-large spots.

Why I like tying playoff invitations to

THE EXNER POINT Rich Exner

league championships: It takes the subjectivity out of the selection process. Win on the field and it doesn't matter what anyone thinks. That's how titles are decided in every other major college or pro sport.

Why I like also leaving several spots open for at-large berths, even if it does bring in subjectivity: One bad day in a long college football season can be overcome. This is especially important for teams play-

ing in the tougher divisions, such as those like the Big Ten East. Ohio State, for example, could be closed out of the Big Ten title game with just one loss to say a Penn State or Michigan but have an otherwise perfect season.

I never saw this idea of a 12-team playoff coming. The limited expansion talk had focused on six or eight teams. But it looks like it has a really good chance of becoming reality – almost a certainty to listen to the school administrators who in June endorsed the idea for further serious review.

What's more to like about it? It restores New Year's Day as a primo college football day. The four quarterfinals would be played on New Year's Day.

And what else? The four first-round games would be played on college campuses, home-field advantage to the higher seeded team. Chalk that up as another plus.

One quibble I have is that the plan limits the automatic berths to six league champions. I'd go another step to seven, leaving

five spots for committee invitations.

Here's how it would all work, as proposed and subject to change.

1. The four highest-ranked league champions would receive automatic berths and byes into the quarterfinals. Based on last season, that would be Alabama (SEC), Clemson (ACC), Ohio State (Big 10) and Oklahoma (Big 12).

2. The next two highest-ranked league champions would receive automatic berths but not first-round byes. Last season, that would have been Cincinnati (American) and Coastal Carolina (Sun Belt). (Note that in an oddity in 2020, the Pac-12 would have been left out as its highest ranked team, USC, was only 17th in the final College Football Playoff rankings. Champion Oregon was 25th.)

3. The remaining six spots would go to the remaining schools ranked highest. Last season, that would have been Notre Dame (fourth), Texas A&M (fifth), Florida (seventh), Georgia (ninth), Iowa State (10th) and Indiana (11th). (Using my suggestion to include seven league champions, Oregon would have been in at Indiana's expense a season ago.)

4. Notre Dame could not receive a bye as long as it remains an independent, even if ranked No. 1 in the country. That's fair, since Notre Dame also doesn't have to play a league title game.

What This Means For OSU

What would this system had meant for Ohio State if it had been in place as long as the four-team playoffs, since the 2014 season?

Playoff appearances every year.

Ohio State has been ranked seventh or higher in the final committee rankings each season, missing out on the playoffs in 2015 (seventh), 2017 (fifth) and 2018 (sixth).

In this new system, OSU would either have had a bye or a home game in the first round each season.

Half Of The Big Ten

As for the Big Ten, the league would have had multiple entries every year, and seven different schools (half of the league) would have been to the playoffs at least once by now.

Twenty of the 84 playoff spots to date would have been awarded to Big Ten schools, breaking down this way.

- 2014 – Ohio State (fourth) and Michigan State (eighth).
- 2015 – Michigan State (third), Iowa (fifth) and Ohio State (seventh).
- 2016 – Ohio State (third), Penn State (fifth), Michigan (sixth) and Wisconsin (eighth).
- 2017 – Ohio State (fifth), Wisconsin (sixth) and Penn State (ninth).
- 2018 – Ohio State (sixth), Michigan (seventh) and Penn State (12th).
- 2019 – Ohio State (second), Wisconsin (eighth) and Penn State (10th).
- 2020 – Ohio State (third) and Indiana (11th).

A Better Regular Season

This new system would make for a more exciting regular season (the focus on conference championships instead of impressing some committee) and a more exciting playoff system by opening the field.

Were Cincinnati and Coastal Carolina actually worthy of contending for a national championship last year? Probably not. But

who are we to say without deciding matters on the field of play?

And take the debate that to this day aggravates Penn State fans from 2016 – the year Penn State beat Ohio State and won the Big Ten but was left out of the playoffs as Ohio State was invited. No debate in this new system. Both would have been there.

In fact, 2016 is the year when the Big Ten would have had four teams in the playoffs. I don't think that would have watered down the regular season at all.

This system would have rewarded Penn State with a bye into the quarterfinals, the result of being a league champion.

Ohio State, Michigan and Wisconsin would have hosted first-round games.

One Negative

I see only one negative. Some schools could end up playing 17 games. That's probably too much football.

This would be the case for a team that plays 12 regular-season games, a league championship game and then four playoff games (assuming it doesn't have a bye and makes it to the title game).

My remedy would be this. Cut the less interesting regular season back to 11 games. For the Big Ten, I would suggest nine conference games and two nonconference games, at least one of the high-profile variety.

Another, more complex, solution could be an 11-game regular season and then allowing teams not making it to their league title game to be paired up for a 12th regular-season game. Some of those games would be meaningful, with schools trying to play their way into the playoffs.

Leveling The Playing Field

The expanded playoffs could help solve another problem that has developed during the four-team playoff era.

During the playoff years, with so much focus on the playoffs, the power of college football has tilted to just a few – mostly Alabama, Clemson and Ohio State. The talent gap has widened as more and more high school players have wanted to be part of those powerhouse, playoff-regular programs.

This has been good for Ohio State, not so good for college football. The gap has widened between the few haves and the many schools a notch below in the rankings.

By expanding the playoffs to 12 teams, perhaps this will be mitigated somewhat in recruiting. And, at the very least, it would provide more opportunities for more players and more teams on the big stage.

When Will It Happen?

I like this idea so much I wish it were in place for the 2021 season. That's not going to happen. But I wouldn't rule out 2022.

Perhaps more realistic is a 2023 start. That's the early date placed on things by College Football Playoff officials being quoted.

But I wonder if all the dollar signs have been entered yet in that talk about holding off until 2023.

Yes, TV and site deals already are in place for years, but money so often talks in college football. And I'd be willing to bet this new system could bring in a lot more money, making all involved very happy sooner than later.

Bring it on as soon as possible.

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Homan's Career Merits His Own Interview

Trivia Time: In 1999, Buckeye Sports Bulletin polled media members, Ohio State sports personnel and BSB readers to determine the top 10 athletes of the 20th century. Can you name those who were voted the 10 greatest Ohio State athletes of the 20th century? You don't have to name them in order. Just come up with the top 10, though everyone should get No. 1.

The answers come later.

A Gentleman Remembered

I don't read obituaries. I never have. It seems kind of a morbid pursuit for something that would yield the loss of someone I know only a couple of times a year. Accordingly, I missed the passing of former Ohio State sports information director Marv Homan. My apologies to the Homan family for missing calling hours. Marv was truly a man who merited respects being paid.

From the time he walked onto campus as a student in 1944 until his retirement as sports information director in December 1987 and then beyond, Homan witnessed as much Ohio State sports history as anyone, calling the famous 1950 Snow Bowl from the radio booth and being present for the entire Woody Hayes era.

But most importantly, Marv Homan was a gentleman. That's a compliment – one of the ultimate compliments in my book – that doesn't seem to be given so much in our profession anymore.

Homan's passing didn't appear to attract the attention that I believe it deserved, given his contributions to the athletic media community. Maybe that's why I was slow in receiving news of his passing.

This is the Interview Issue of BSB. In honor of his life as a Buckeye, I am going to take some stories from the BSB archives, and using quotes from those articles, create an interview with Marv as if I'd had a final chance to speak with him. I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed knowing him.

BSB: Your original intent was a career in broadcasting. How did you wind up in the sports information office in 1949?

Homan: "Ohio State was to be only a short layover. The Ohio State job sounded good at the time and I took it, but I took it on a temporary basis, hoping something would develop that would allow me to do some broadcasting in baseball. And interestingly, the job lasted 38 years."

BSB: How did you wind up staying so long?

Homan: "I really learned to thoroughly enjoy sports information work. Also, the athletic department was always very good to me."

BSB: It had to have helped that you got to broadcast Buckeye football and basketball games from 1950 to 1981 with the exception of two years when you were first promoted to sports information director in 1973.

Homan: "I am sure there were times when (my wife) Dorothy would rather I had a job with more conventional hours – like a truck driver. But she was so understanding through the years."

BSB: In your time in the sports information office, Ohio State won many Big Ten football championships and versions of five national titles. What was the best of all the football teams you were a part of?

Homan: "Even though they lost to Michigan that year and the team had won the national championship the year before, I would say the 1969 team. What made the '69 team so remarkable is that the majority of their football games were over in the first quarter. That team was so explosive and could score from all over the field and did. They literally wiped out pretty good opponents."

BSB: All that winning meant 10 trips to the Rose Bowl for you. Why is the Rose Bowl so special?

Homan: "It is the oldest. It is the most famous. In terms of size of crowd, it is the largest. It is a

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

part of the incredible day that the Tournament of Roses puts on."

BSB: You did not attend your first Rose Bowl until Jan. 1, 1955. What do you remember about that game?

Homan: "The memorable thing about that is it rained. It just poured from start to finish. I was broadcasting the game, and I don't see how I could have got much more wet. I might as well have jumped in a river because I was in the open. A key factor in that game (a 20-7 win against USC that netted the Buckeyes the national championship) was Ohio State's ability to hold onto the football, not committing a single fumble, while USC had some slippery hands."

BSB: What was your biggest Rose Bowl?

Homan: "The most pressure-packed football game that I've ever seen Ohio State play was the 1969 Rose Bowl game. That far exceeded any Michigan buildup. This was on a national scale. This was East vs. West, No. 1 vs. No. 2, and it was the Rose Bowl. It just had everything."

"It was one of those dream matchups. It was (USC running back and Heisman Trophy winner) O.J. Simpson's final game. I don't believe we've ever played a game with as much media hype as that one had. The fact Ohio State, with a sophomore-dominated team, was able to win was a remarkable accomplishment."

BSB: What do you recall about the game itself?

Homan: "Rex Kern was just remarkable that day. He got the player of the game, and it was really significant because, as I said, it was Simpson's last game. O.J. had one great run – a long one for a touchdown probably only he could have pulled off – but other than that, he was really defended well."

BSB: With all the festivities and media attention, what was Woody like during Rose Bowl trips?

Homan: "A lot depended on the maturity of the team. If he took a real young team, in all probability he was going to be stricter. And then there was Archie Griffin's group, which went to four consecutive Rose Bowls. With that group, Woody was much more liberal because they had been there before. He practiced as often, but not as long, not as hard, and with not as much contact. And they probably had more liberal curfew laws."

BSB: You also went to two Rose Bowls with Earle Bruce. What was he like?

Homan: "Earle was kind of down the middle on that. He wasn't as strict as Woody's strictest year, but he was probably more strict than Woody's liberal years."

BSB: What about Ohio State basketball?

Homan: "Without question, the teams from 1960 through 1962 were the best of my time here. The '60 team won the national championship, and they finished runners-up the following two years."

"That was really a golden era because those teams played extremely demanding schedules. Game after game would be broken open in the latter stages of the first half or early in the second half. We've never had more dominating basketball teams."

BSB: Will there ever be an era like that again?

Homan: "Because there are so many great basketball players now, and they are so well distributed nationally, it's going to be hard for any team to dominate in a three-year period like Ohio State did in '60,'61,'62. I'm not sure we'll see that dominance again."

BSB: During 38 years in the sports information office, there had to be some low points.

Homan: "Well first there was the incident with Woody Hayes at the 1978 Gator Bowl. That was such a difficult situation because it occurred in such an unlikely place – Jacksonville, Fla. – and we were staying on Jacksonville Beach, trying to get the media together, and I didn't know where all the media were staying. It was really a public relations nightmare."

"All of us were extremely saddened at the event. It was an unfortunate way to end a brilliant career."

"And I'd have to say in all sincerity the next lowest moment was Nov. 16, 1987 (when Bruce was fired the week of the Michigan game). And you know about that one. That was a low moment, no doubt about it."

BSB: What were the biggest changes in athletics you saw during your time at Ohio State?

Homan: "The rise of women's sports was most impressive. Back in that glory-year period, there were no intercollegiate sports for women. It really didn't come into being until the mid-'70s. It was a pleasant change."

"That was a positive change."

"College athletic departments also began to take on a business look, so to speak. I'd like to think there isn't too much emphasis on college athletics, but realistically there is. Because of the desire to make a bowl or the Final Four, the temptation to do things the wrong way exists. Boosters and alumni can add to that. They may mean well, but that opens the door to trouble. Abuses lead to overemphasis."

BSB: Any closing thoughts for our readers?

Homan: "I would like to think that, over a period of years, that as much as we have worked with the media, we've built a feeling of trust, understanding the fact that we are going to be absolutely honest and forthright in our dealing with the media in telling the Ohio State sports story. I would like to think we have been somewhat successful in that venture, and that takes years to do."

"It's not that people don't trust you. You have to win their trust."

At that point, I would have thanked Marv for the interview and told him how much I appreciated his support through the years and how much I appreciated him coming to hear me speak the many times I visited The Forum at Knightsbridge, where he lived in his later years.

And most of all, I would thank him for not dismissing an aspiring 29-year-old entrepreneur and journalist when he presented the sports information director of arguably the most prestigious athletic department in the country with the cockamamie concept of Buckeye Sports Bulletin – and even credentialed us.

Thanks again, Marv. There are so many of us who will miss you.

Century Greats, Interview Issue

Here are the top 10 Ohio State athletes of the 20th century, as voted back in late 1999:

No. 1, Jesse Owens; No. 2, Jack Nicklaus; No. 3, Jerry Lucas; No. 4, Archie Griffin; No. 5, John Havlicek; No. 6, Chic Harley; No. 7, Jim Parker; No. 8, Chris Spielman; No. 9, Vic Janowicz; No. 10, Eddie George.

The most striking thing to me about the list

is the fact that Ohio State is known as a football school and yet the top three athletes of that 100 years – and if they voted in 2021, they might still be the top three Ohio State athletes of all time – represented track and field, golf and basketball, respectively.

The list came to mind for me when we were assembling this Interview Issue. We were a scheduling conflict away from having both Jack Nicklaus and Jerry Lucas, the second- and third-greatest OSU athletes of the 20th century and maybe of all time, interviewed in the same issue. That would have been a power-packed Interview Issue. Lucas is here for your enjoyment, and we will make every effort to work things out with the Golden Bear next July.

I want to thank all of the interview subjects in this go-around for taking the time to chat with members of the BSB staff. Their tales are both entertaining and informative. Thanks to Lucas, Jim Brown, Paul Keels, Tim May, Jack Park, Gene Smith, Ty Tucker and my dear friend Butch Moore, who started here at Buckeye Sports Bulletin 40 years ago and *never* forgot his BSB roots.

Some other thoughts about the All-Century list.

In any list like this one, there tends to be a recency bias. To see Chic Harley rated at No. 6 more than 80 years after he last donned the Scarlet and Gray was impressive. If the athletes were rated on impact to Ohio State, he probably could have been rated even higher. More recent "old-timers" like Vic Janowicz and Jim Parker also got their due, with Parker's ranking particularly impressive because, unlike Janowicz, he had no Heisman and he toiled in the trenches. With all the greats who have played at Ohio State, you also get a sense of the impression Spielman made with his No. 8 ranking.

I think there might have been a little recency bias with George's ranking over Hop Cassady, who finished a distant 20th, despite both being Heisman winners and both among the best of the best.

Katie Smith was the highest-ranked woman at No. 15. I believe she would still be the highest ranked woman if the voting were held today, though I think she would be ranked even higher.

As for Owens at No. 1, I don't know how it could have been anyone else. He not only won four Olympic Gold medals in Hitler's Germany, but he famously set four world records in less than an hour at the 1935 Big Ten Track and Field Championships at Michigan.

When we ran the poll results, we published comments on each athlete from the voting readers.

"He set world records and won medals in two evil empires – Ann Arbor and Berlin," Bob Cody of Columbus said of Owens.

What more can I say?

Thanks, Lori

Many of you might have noticed bylines from Lori Schmidt contained in the past few issues of Buckeye Sports Bulletin as well as on our website BuckeyeSports.com. Many are probably familiar with her from her work for many years on radio in Columbus. Sadly for us, but happily for Lori, she has moved on to bigger – and we hope better – things at The Columbus Dispatch.

I think all of us were surprised at how much of an impact she had in her brief time with BSB. Her unique story ideas, leadership ability, willingness to work on weekends to give her teammates a bit of rest, knowledge of social media, tales of her rambunctious dog and, of course, her trademark hats all were a part of her unique presence. Most of all, we would all agree that she was a joy to work with.

Good luck, Lori!

Reds JULY 2021



JULY 2-4



PRESENTED BY
SOUR PATCH KIDS

FRIDAY // 7:10

- Post-game Fireworks Show, presented by Mike Castrucci Automotive



SATURDAY // 4:10

- Patriotic T-Shirt, presented by Bally Sports Ohio
First 15,000 fans

SUNDAY // 1:10

- Family Sunday, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Sonny Gray Fathead® Kids Giveaway, presented by Mike Castrucci Automotive
Kids 14 & younger
- Military Appreciation Day, presented by CareSource



JULY 16-18



PRESENTED BY
CINCINNATI BELL

FRIDAY // 7:10

- Post-game Fireworks Show, presented by Buffalo Wings & Rings

SATURDAY // 7:10

- Reds Poster
First 15,000 fans

SUNDAY // 1:10

- Family Sunday, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Luis Castillo Fathead® Kids Giveaway, presented by Great Clips
Kids 14 & younger



JULY 19-21



MONDAY // 7:10

TUESDAY // 7:10



- STAR WARS™ Package, presented by Skyline Chili
Featuring an EXCLUSIVE "C-3PO" Bobblehead!
(item only available with purchase of ticket package)
Available at [reds.com/Themes](https://www.reds.com/Themes)



WEDNESDAY // 12:35

JULY 23-25



PRESENTED BY
KROGER ZERO HUNGER ZERO WASTE

FRIDAY // 7:10

- Post-game Fireworks Show

SATURDAY // 7:10

- Reds Socks, presented by Columbia Chevrolet and Joseph Chevrolet
First 15,000 fans



SUNDAY // 1:10

- Family Sunday, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Topps Cards Day
Premium Topps Baseball Card, presented by Topps
First 30,000 fans

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