

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Nov. 30, 1991

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Announcement Made Just Before OSU-UM Kickoff

Cooper Receives Three-Year Extension

By Mark Rea

Less than 24 hours before Ohio State lost for the fourth straight season to Michigan, OSU athletic director Jim Jones determined the fate of his head football coach.

Jones said he had recommended to university president E. Gordon Gee that head coach John Cooper be given a three-year extension on his contract, which still had one year to go.

The recommendation, subject to approval by Gee and the school's board of trustees, would take Cooper through the 1995 season as head coach of the Buckeyes.

In a news release given to reporters in the press box at Michigan Stadium about 30 minutes before kickoff, Jones said, "We are pleased with the direction our program is going, and with the effort of our student-athletes on the field and in the classroom."

Later, when discussing the extension with reporters in person, Jones was quizzed on why the statement was made prior to the game when Gee had repeatedly said an evaluation on Cooper's contract would not be made until after the regular season had ended.

"I can't speak for President Gee on when he made up his mind, or what he was going to do," Jones said. "He said over and over and over he was waiting for a recommendation from Jim Jones. He got it yesterday afternoon."

"I just came to the conclusion in my own mind what decision I wanted to recommend. There was no reason for me to sit on it for two more weeks or one day or whatever. So, I made my recommendation."

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Getting a block from teammate Dwayne Ware (8) on Ohio State's Scottie Graham, Michigan kick returner Desmond Howard (21) gets ready to cut down the sideline on his way to a 93-yard punt return for a touchdown. It marked the longest punt return in Michigan football history and paved the way for the Wolverines to defeat the Buckeyes 31-3.

Wolves Laid Foundation For Latest Victory Four Years Ago

By Mark Rea

The calendar read Nov. 23, 1991.

Michigan had just put the finishing touches on a 31-3 victory over Ohio State, and despite what the calendar read, the Wolverines essentially won that game four years ago.

That was the time when the Buckeyes were in the midst of firing head coach Earle Bruce and launching a nationwide search that ultimately led them to signing John Cooper.

OSU was coming off a 6-4-1 record under Bruce in 1987, and although Cooper was only one year removed from winning national college coach of the

year honors at Arizona State, it appeared that he would need to implement a rebuilding process at Ohio State.

During this same time span, a small tailback named Desmond Howard was playing high school football at St. Joseph High School in Cleveland. All of the big-name schools were after Howard, but experts figured his ultimate choice would be made between Ohio State and Michigan.

"According to Howard, the choice came down to one thing — playing for Bo Schembechler, who was about to embark upon his 20th season as head coach at Michigan, or for Cooper, who

was about to embark upon his first at Ohio State.

"It was nothing against Ohio State," Howard said. "I just thought that I wanted to go to a program that was established and not one that looked like it was going to be rebuilding. It looks like I made the right choice."

Winning the Howard sweepstakes also netted the Wolverines a bonus that year. Howard had made it clear that wherever he went, he wanted to make sure that his quarterback went with

Continued On Page 15

BSB's Final Weekly Issue

This is the final weekly issue of *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* for the 1991 football season. Our next issue, published in mid-December, will feature a Hall of Fame Bowl preview. We will return to a weekly schedule in January.

The entire staff of Columbus Sports Publications wishes all of our readers a very happy holiday season. We look forward to serving you in the coming year.

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Just Some Random Thoughts

It's my two cents ...

If you have been paying attention the last few weeks, you will know that I agree with a three-year extension of John Cooper's contract ... Regardless of the impassioned arguments I have heard the past few days from fans who say that Cooper is breeding mediocrity at Ohio State, I still think the Buckeyes are improving a little each year ... The only problem I had with the extension was the timing of the announcement itself ... For all of the posturing by OSU officials who say they learned a lot from the PR fiasco of firing Earle Bruce, they certainly didn't show it ... It was a foregone conclusion that, after the win over Indiana, Cooper was going to receive an extension ... Why not award that extension to him at the beginning of Michigan week instead of waiting until 30 minutes before kickoff to make the announcement, then setting yourself up for criticism when the Buckeyes lose to Michigan by the biggest margin in 45 years?

Of course, there could be another reason for the timing of the announcement ... In my opinion, I believe that university president Gordon Gee was just about fed up with all of the criticism of Cooper and his program and the calls for his dismissal ... What better way to send a clear message to everyone involved as to exactly who is running the show at Ohio State than to fly in the face of criticism by announcing the extension before a Michigan game that the Buckeyes entered as two-touchdown underdogs ... There should be no mistake made about Gee ... His public persona would lead one to believe that he is somewhat of a bookish nerd ... But no one rises to the level he has attained in life without a high level of intelligence and savvy ... Gee believes the program is headed in the proper direction and he believes Cooper should stay on to continue his work ... It is no coincidence, then, that that is precisely what is going to happen.

I watched all 11 games this season from start to finish and I still can't figure out why people are so upset about the season ... The defense played exceptionally well all year long, and with a couple of breaks here and there, the Buckeyes could be looking at a 10-1 finish ... The loss to Michigan wasn't even as bad as the final score indicated ... Two turnovers deep in OSU territory and a breakdown on special teams led to 17 quick points for the Wolverines ... Take those away and it's a 10-3 ball game at halftime ... After that, anything could have happened, especially with the way the OSU defense was playing.

All of you people screaming for Kent Graham's scalp are probably the same ones who couldn't wait for the day Greg Frey played his last game ... To be sure, Graham does some things that absolutely drive me crazy, but I happen to still think he's a pretty good quarterback ... I believe Graham's biggest problem this year has been the distraction of never really feeling comfortable as the number one quarterback ... The coaching staff preferred to let the quarterback situation linger far too long, and although it wound up benefiting Kirk Herbstreit, it ultimately ruined Graham ... The reason he kept holding the ball so long and taking sacks? He was afraid to throw an interception for fear he'd be yanked out of the game ... There were also some horrendous breakdowns up

Editor's Notebook with Mark Rea

front in the offensive line ... No quarterback named Joe, whether his last name was Pickens or Montana, could have gotten off passes under those circumstances.

Speaking of Pickens, I really think the rumors are incorrect and he is not considering a transfer ... I can think of two excellent reasons why Pickens should want to remain a Buckeye ... Next year, he should be in the thick of the race for the starting job with Herbstreit and redshirt freshman-to-be Bob Hoying ... Second, if Pickens transfers, he would have to sit out the 1992 season, then would have only two years remaining in his college career ... That's the same road traveled by Graham.

As long as we're on the subject of quarterbacks, Frey has quietly come on the scene in Columbus in a new career ... He is currently working for an area radio station, giving analysis and commentary on the Buckeyes once a week as well as before and after game action ... Always a good interview when he was a player, Frey is now earning a name for himself on the other side of the mic-

rophone ... He is also beginning to see the other side of the coin as his sometimes-critical comments of the Buckeyes this season and head coach John Cooper have drawn some ire from the coaching staff ... Some of you may have seen Frey on ESPN during the OSU-Indiana game Nov. 16 ... He did the sideline reporting for the cable sports network during that game.

Now that the regular season is over, and just before the recruiting avalanche is upon us, the most often heard question regards Alonzo Spellman and his future plans ... Although I have no facts on which to base this opinion, I believe Spellman will make himself available for the NFL draft next spring ... Despite a season regarded by many as subpar, Spellman can still command quite a salary in next year's draft ... Some already say he'll go in the first round ... Somewhere around the fifth or sixth round sounds more realistic to me ... And before you go, Alonzo, remember what happened last spring when all the experts claimed Treg Lee would be a first-round pick in the NBA draft ... He was never selected and is currently playing basketball in Italy.

And, since you asked, I think Steve Tovar will be back ... In recent weeks, Tovar has hinted he might leave if the price was right, then later said he would probably be back ... The price will be even better if Tovar stays, so I figure he's staying.

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Michigan's Big First Half Puts Buckeyes Behind Early

Comeback Not Meant To Be This Season

By Mark Rea

Three years before, the scoreboard screamed a 20-0 advantage for Michigan at halftime and Ohio State roared back to take the lead before losing in the final minute.

So when the Buckeyes trailed 24-3 at halftime to the Wolverines Nov. 23 in Ann Arbor, many Ohio State players remained calm.

"We were down 20 points three years ago and almost came back, so we never really thought the wind was out of our sails," said sophomore long snapper Jim Borchers.

However, in that contest, the Buckeyes' offense exploded for 31 points and more than 300 yards in total offense in the second half.

There would be no such explosion this time. Despite the fact that backup quarterback Kirk Herbstreit seemed to rally the troops for brief periods of time, Ohio State never got untracked on offense and eventually succumbed to the fourth-ranked Wolverines 31-3.

The Buckeyes' defense actually had a decent afternoon, although the final score would indicate just the opposite. Michigan gained 323 total yards in the game, about 130 below its average. And the Buckeyes allowed only two drives of more than 50 yards, and the Wolverines managed to score only 10 points out of those drives.

It was the lack of execution on offense, two costly first-half turnovers and a dazzling punt return by Heisman Trophy favorite Desmond Howard that eventually did in the Buckeyes.

"They came out from the get-go and got after us and they never let up," said sophomore linebacker Jason Simmons.

The Wolverines did jump on the Buckeyes early, putting together their best drive of the game on their opening possession. Taking the ball at its own 24-yard line, Michigan marched 76 yards in 10 plays to score the game's first points.

Three big plays hurt the Buckeyes in that drive. Sophomore tailback Ricky Powers ripped off 14 yards up the middle on the first play from scrimmage, then quarterback Elvis Grbac hit split end Yale Van Dyne for a 17-yard pass two plays later. Two plays after that, backup tailback Jesse Johnson set up the touchdown with a 27-yard bolt through the left side of the line.

The drive appeared to stall at the three-yard line when the Buckeyes stopped Powers on third down for no gain. The Wolverines lined up for a field goal, but holder Ken Sollom shoveled the ball ahead to a crossing Greg McThomas, and the Michigan fullback bulldozed his way ahead for the first down.

On the next play, another fullback, Burnie Legette, dove into the end zone for the touchdown.

The Buckeyes looked as though they would have the answer for Michigan's opening tally when they moved down the field. Six of OSU's first eight plays went for five yards or more as the Buckeyes streaked into UM territory.

But the drive eventually stalled when starting quarterback Kent Graham was forced to scramble on third down and came up eight yards short of a first down. OSU place-kicker Tim Williams came on to attempt a 46-yard



Despite the best efforts of Ohio State defenders such as Steve Tovar (58), Alonzo Spellman (partially hidden under Tovar), Judah Herman (partially hidden under Spellman) and Andy Gurd (49), Michigan fullback Burnie Legette managed to vault over the top and into the end zone for the first score of the game. The Wolverines got the lead on this play and never gave it up, beating OSU 31-3.

field goal against a stiff wind, but the attempt fell a few yards short.

The Buckeyes got perhaps their only good break of the game less than three minutes later when linebacker John Kacherski popped Powers near midfield, causing a fumble that was recovered by OSU's Mark Williams.

The Bucks advanced the ball into Michigan territory again but stalled once more when the Wolverines sniffed out a third-down draw play and threw tailback Carlos Snow for a three-yard loss.

That set up a 50-yard field goal attempt for Williams, who now was kicking with the wind early in the second quarter. This time, he got the attempt just over the crossbar, narrowing Michigan's lead to 7-3.

Unfortunately for the Buckeyes, that was their last score of the game. Things started falling apart a few minutes later when they regained possession of the football deep in their own territory, and within a four-minute period, the Wolverines rattled off three quick scores.

The first two were set up by turnovers. On second down at the OSU 15-yard line, Graham rolled out and overthrew his intended receiver, the ball ending up in the arms of UM defensive back Lance Dottin. He took the ball at the 30 and ran it back to the 12-yard line. Five plays later, Johnson bounced into the end zone from one yard out, giving Michigan a 14-3 advantage.

On the very next play from scrimmage, Snow cut into the right side of the Michigan line and UM linebacker

OHIO STATE vs. MICHIGAN

AT A GLANCE

PLAY OF THE GAME: With just a little under 11 minutes left to play in the first half, OSU trailed 7-3. Taking possession of the ball deep in their own territory, the Buckeyes attempted to pass their way back into the game. But, on the second play of the possession, QB Kent Graham overthrew his intended receiver and the pass was intercepted by Michigan DB Lance Dottin. The turnover set up a touchdown for the Wolverines and unleashed an avalanche of 17 points within a four-minute period, turning the 7-3 advantage into a 24-3 bulge. It was a deficit from which the Buckeyes could never recover.

OFFENSIVE PERFORMERS: OSU: TB Carlos Snow, 24 carries, 64 yards, 2.3 avg., 0 TDs, 4 receptions, 33 yards, 8.3 avg., 0 TDs; QB Kirk Herbstreit, 8 completions, 11 attempts, 83 yards, 0 TDs, 0 Ints.; TE Jeff Ellis, 3 receptions, 37 yards, 12.3 avg., 0 TDs; FB Scottie Graham, 7 carries, 23 yards, 3.3 avg., 0 TDs; SE Brian Stabbin, 2 receptions, 24 yards, 12.0 avg., 0 TDs; UM: WR Desmond Howard, 3 receptions, 96 yards, 32.0 avg., 0 TDs, 1 punt return, 93 yards, 93.0 avg., 1 TD; TB Tyrone Wheatley, 12 carries, 79 yards, 6.6 avg., 1 TD; QB Elvis Grbac, 5 completions, 14 attempts, 123 yards, 0 TDs, 0 Ints.; TB Jesse Johnson, 11 carries, 61 yards, 5.5 avg., 1 TD.

DEFENSIVE PERFORMERS: OSU: ILB Steve Tovar, 9 tackles; SS Roger Harper, 5 solo tackles, 1 tackle for loss; CB Tim Walton, 5 solo tackles, 1 tackle for loss; OLB John Kacherski, 4 solo tackles, 1 for loss, 1 fumble caused; OLB Mark Williams, 3 tackles, 1 for loss, 1 fumble recovery; UM: ILB Erik Anderson, 17 tackles, 16 solos, 3 tackles for loss, 1 sack, 1 fumble recovery; OLB Brian Townsend, 10 solo tackles, 3 for loss; DT Mike Evans, 5 solo tackles, 1 for loss, 1 sack, 1 pass broken up; CB Lance Dottin, 2 tackles, 1 interception.

GAME NOTES: Michigan's 26-point margin of victory was its biggest defeat over Ohio State since the 1946 team handed the Buckeyes a 58-6 loss. OSU's four-game losing streak to the Wolverines is the longest in the series since the Buckeyes won four straight from 1960-63. Ohio State had not lost four straight games to Michigan since 1945-48.

INJURY REPORT: No major injuries were reported after the Michigan game. QB Kirk Herbstreit suffered a mild concussion, but will be available for the Hall of Fame Bowl. CB Bryan Cook (reconstructive knee surgery) is the only player who should miss the bowl game due to injury.

NEXT OPPONENT: The Buckeyes will make their second appearance in the Hall of Fame Bowl in three years, taking on Syracuse on New Year's Day. The game will be televised nationally by NBC at 1 p.m. The last time the two teams met, OSU won 26-9 in the 1988 season opener.

TWO DEEP VS. MICHIGAN

OFFENSE	STABKIN	GALLOWAY
WR	KLINKE	DILLY
LT	HARTMAN	KELLY
LG	LONG	THURSH
C	MONNOT	RAMOTH
RG	WINDROW	SHOAP
RT	ELLIS	SAUNDERS
TW	EDWARDS	D'GRAFFREID
FL	G. GRAHAM	KIRKHERBRETT
QB	SNOW	BYNOTE
TB	S. GRAHAM	COTTERAN
PK	T. WILLIAMS	BERGER
DEFENSE	M. WILLIAMS	GURD
DT	FRIMEL	BONHAUS
NG	G. SMITH	BRECKMAN
DE	SPELLMAN	FORTEK
OLB	KACHERSKI	SIMMONS
ILB	HERMAN	LEASE
ILB	TOVAR	ILJOHNSON
RCB	PAULK	KERNER
FB	NELSON	TAYLOR
SB	HARPER	PAUL
LCB	WALTON	PATILLO
P	T. WILLIAMS	KIMMEL

Brian Townsend stripped him of the ball. The Wolverines recovered and four paces later got a 37-yard field goal from kicker J.D. Carlson.

Then, when the Buckeyes failed to move the ball on their next series, Williams tried to angle his punt toward the sideline, but Howard was able to catch up to it at the seven-yard line. He hesitated for a split second, then cut between two OSU defenders and streaked down the sideline for a 93-yard touchdown return.

The run, the longest punt return in Michigan football history, put an exclamation mark on Howard's storybook season and effectively put an end to any hopes the Buckeyes had of making a comeback.

Still, Simmons said the mood was fairly upbeat in the locker room at halftime despite the 24-3 deficit.

"Coming into the second half, we thought we at least had a chance to come back and pull one out," he said.

The Buckeyes mounted a serious charge to open the second half, embarking on a sustained drive that eventually ate up more than half of the third quarter. Herbstreit entered the game in place of Graham and got the Buckeyes moving. In fact, during the march, the offense converted a fourth-down play.

But Herbstreit ran out of miracles on another fourth down play. Protection broke down quickly on a pass and the OSU quarterback was sacked for a 10-yard loss.

On the next play, Grbac hooked up with Howard for a 50-yard pass play, setting up another touchdown for the Wolverines. Freshman tailback Tyrone Wheatley got the honors this time, bobbing and weaving his way into the end zone from five yards out to make it 31-3.

On the Buckeyes' next possession, they again went on a long drive, going all the way from their own 17-yard line to the Michigan two. But disaster struck again when Snow fumbled again on first down and goal to go.

That gave Ohio State two drives in the second half — one of 57 yards that covered over seven and a half minutes, the other of 81 yards that covered another seven and a half minutes — and it had absolutely nothing to show for them.

The remainder of the game was played mostly between the 20-yard lines as a cold rain fell steadily throughout the fourth quarter.

Following the game, OSU offensive coordinator Elliot Uzelac — who spent two tours of duty as an assistant on former Michigan head coach Bo Schembechler's coaching staff — said there was no secret to the outcome.

"They played exactly the way they've played all year long and did a great job," Uzelac said. "They forced us out of our game. We're a better running team, but when we got so far behind, we were forced to throw, and that hurt."

The Buckeyes, who entered the game averaging 241.3 yards per game on the ground, managed only 109 against the Wolverines. Despite his two fumbles, Snow was still the team's leading rusher with 54 yards on 24 carries.

OSU wasn't any better in the passing department. Graham managed to complete only five of 14 attempts for 42 yards. Herbstreit had a better time of it throwing the ball, connecting on eight of 11 passes for 82 yards. But Herbstreit's running ability was held in check by the Wolverines. He gained only five yards on four carries.

Howard was head and shoulders above everyone else in the game when it came to offense. In addition to his punt return, he had three receptions for 96 yards, one kickoff return for 16 yards and one rush for eight yards. He accounted for 213 all-purpose yards.

On defense, UM linebacker Erick Anderson was a one-man wrecking crew. The Butkus Award finalist totaled 17 tackles, 16 of them solos, including three for loss and one sack. Anderson also recovered Snow's second fumble.

Game Notes

About the only thing the Buckeyes could pride themselves in concerning Howard was that they kept him from catching a touchdown pass.

That snapped a streak of 10 games in a single season in which he had caught at least one TD pass and another of 12 straight regular-season games in which he had caught at least one. Both of the those marks tie all-time NCAA records.

WITH HIS yardage against the Wolverines, Snow moved his career rushing total to 2,918. He still needs 82 yards in the Hall of Fame Bowl against Syracuse to become only the fourth player in OSU history to rush for 3,000 yards in a career.

Archie Griffin (5,589, 1972-75), Tim Spencer (3,553, 1979-82) and Keith Byars (3,200, 1982-85) were the other three.

JUNIOR SPLIT end Brian Stablein

caught two passes for 24 yards against the Wolverines, extending his streak to 12 straight games in which he has caught at least one pass.

Gary Williams (1979-82) holds the school record in that department with 48 straight games with at least one reception.

GRAHAM PASSED for only 42 yards in the contest, but it was enough to push him over the 1,000-yard mark for the season. He has now completed 79 of 153 passes (51.6 percent) for 1,018 yards and four touchdowns.

He is on track to have the fewest passing yards for an OSU quarterback since Art Schlichter threw for 1,215 during his freshman season in 1978.

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'Worst Game I Have Ever Played' — Senior Tailback

Snow Claims Stats Don't Tell Whole Story

By Mark Rea

If statistics told the whole story, one would be led to believe that Ohio State senior tailback Carlos Snow had a decent game against Michigan.

While the Buckeyes were dropping a 31-3 decision, Snow was carrying the ball 24 times for 54 yards, catching four passes for another 33 and returning two kickoffs for 32 more. That accounted for 119 all-purpose yards.

However, Snow was thoroughly disgusted with his performance. In fact, he ranked it at the bottom of every other game he has ever played.

"I think this is the worst game I have ever played as far as blocking and running the ball," he said. "I know this is the worst game I've played this year, and probably since I've ever been here."

"Things just didn't click. I had a good week of practice, and the team had a good week of practice, but we just didn't come out here and execute like we were supposed to."

Snow, who has battled back from a number of injuries to regain the starting tailback slot, was revisited by an old nemesis in the game. Plagued by fumbles early in his Ohio State career, Snow had not fumbled at all in the team's first 10 games this season. He coughed up the ball twice against Michigan.

Although the Wolverines were able to turn the fumbles into only three points, both turnovers proved costly to the Buckeyes.

In the second quarter, right after the Wolverines had capitalized on a Kent Graham interception to pad their lead to 14-3, Snow went into the right side of the line where he was met by UM linebacker Brian Townsend. Snow lost control of the ball and it was recovered by Michigan strong safety Otis Williams.

That gave the Wolves possession on



Heavy traffic was what Ohio State senior tailback Carlos Snow (25) encountered much of the afternoon against Michigan. The Wolverines held the Buckeyes' leading ground gainer to just 54 yards on 24 carries and caused Snow to fumble twice. The first set up a Michigan field goal in the first half and the second halted an OSU scoring drive on the UM two-yard line.

the OSU 21-yard line and six plays later, kicker J.D. Carlson booted a 37-yard field goal to give UM a 17-3 lead.

Snow's second fumble came early in the fourth quarter as the Buckeyes were

driving, trying to make a game of it. They had come all the way from their own 17 and had first and goal at the Michigan two when Snow tested the right side of the line again.

As he hit the line and made contact, the ball squirted out of his grasp and Michigan linebacker Erick Anderson pounced on it. OSU never seriously

threatened to score after that.

Snow was at a loss to explain what went wrong on either play.

"Thank God they didn't score off of both of the turnovers that I had, but they did get three points out of one of them," he said.

"On the second fumble, it was wet and cold, and when I went up there, I

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Cooper Heaps Lots Of Praise On Wolves

EDITOR'S NOTE: This football season, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* will publish excerpts of Ohio State head coach John Cooper's postgame press conference. Here is what Cooper had to say after the Buckeyes' loss at Michigan.

COOPER: "We got beat by a good football team. Michigan is every bit as good as advertised. You have to give them a lot of credit. I thought their defense really played an exceptional ball game. Offensively, we didn't get anything going. We had the ball for long periods of time, but I guess that's the only thing that kept the score from being any worse than what it was. Unfortunately, we didn't get any points on the scoreboard when we needed them."

"I think the turnover, the intercepted pass there before halftime that gave them a touchdown, was a big play. Certainly, Desmond Howard's punt return was probably the one play, if I singled one play out, that took away any realistic chance we had of making a comeback and getting back in the ball game. Howard is a great football player. Like I said coming in, in my opinion there shouldn't even be a contest who the Heisman Trophy winner is."

"We were trying to kick it away from him, kick it out of bounds, to be honest with you, and I thought it was a good kick. He ran and made a good play, and once he gets the ball in the open field, it's over. The other two jump ball situations, they throw the ball up in the air and he just goes and gets it. What can you say? He's a phenomenal athlete and he got the job done."

"Our inability to protect our quarterback on drop-back passes, I think again, hurt us a lot today. Our inability to score when we got the ball down on their end of the field really hurt us. And then again, the turnovers. The fumble and the intercepted pass right before halftime really was the difference in the ball game."

"They're a great team. Erick Anderson is about as good a linebacker as I think you're going to see. He's a class guy."

"There were a couple of calls, the one fumble in front of our bench, there is no question that that was our football. But obviously the officiating didn't beat us. I don't want to get off on that."

Q. Really, how far apart are the Ohio State and Michigan teams right now?

COOPER: "Well, you saw the game today. Right now, based on today, we're 28 points apart."

Q. Discuss Michigan's depth at running back.

COOPER: "I've said all week how good they are at running back. Ricky Powers, Jesse Johnson and Tyrone Wheatley are exceptional backs. It's no secret. We knew about all of those guys in high school. Everybody talks about our running backs. Today I think you guys saw firsthand that they've got some pretty good backs. Maybe now you'll write a little bit about their depth at running back."

Q. When did you make the decision to go with Kirk Herbstreit at quarterback in the second half?

COOPER: "At halftime."

Q. What was Graham not doing that you decided to make the change at halftime?

COOPER: "He overthrew a wide-open receiver, for one. Then I felt like, personally, he might have been holding the ball a little bit too long there at the end of the first half. There was one second before halftime, and I don't like to see a quarterback take a sack when there's one second left. And we felt like, hey, we might as well play Herbstreit and see if he can give us a spark, which I thought he did."

Q. When Herbstreit was hurt later in the second half, why did you make the decision to go back to Kent Graham when you said there was no realistic chance of winning after Howard's punt return?

COOPER: "I never said there was no realistic chance. But we had two quarterbacks ready to play this week and one of them was hurt. Who are you going to put in?"

Q. So, Joe Pickens wasn't ready to play at all?

COOPER: "We didn't work Joe Pickens this week. We try to get two quarterbacks ready to play, and Joe didn't take any snaps. I don't feel like it would have been fair to put Joe Pickens in the ball game when he really hadn't rehearsed the game plan this week in practice. I mean, they're leading 31-3 and they've got their first-teamers in the game."

Q. What happened with Foster Paulk and how much of a factor was it having both Paulk and previously injured Bryan Cook, your two starting cornerbacks, out of the game?

COOPER: "That's not an excuse. We had cornerbacks playing. Foster sprained his ankle early in the ball game. They did a good job with their receivers blocking him, and they apparently rolled him up and he had a sprained ankle and couldn't come back and play."

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Q. Is Michigan really as good as they appeared, or did you help them a little bit today?

COOPER: "They're a good team. Obviously, we helped them today. They're a good team. I think they're as good a team as we've played since I've been in this league."

Q. As far as offensively and defensively, did you stick to your game plan, or did Michigan take away the things you wanted to do?

COOPER: "Our game plan was very simple. We were trying to run the football, and we're trying to mix it up with play-action passes, knowing we had to throw the football to keep them a little bit off balance. Defensively, we wanted to take away the big play. On special teams, we wanted to keep the ball out of Desmond Howard's hands and worked all week on trying to punt the ball out of bounds when the ball was on the bound-

ary and kick it across the field when it was on the hash mark. We did a good job except for one time, and when you put the ball in his hands, you can see what happened to it."

Q. Can you comment on the play of Michigan's linebackers?

COOPER: "Well, I think I commented earlier about how good I thought Erick Anderson was. I'll tell you who else is a great player and that's (Brian) Townsend. Both of those guys are great football players."

Q. How much of a surprise was the fake field goal Michigan had on its first drive?

COOPER: "I don't think that was a surprise. Unfortunately, they had an opportunity to get a first down. It was one of those plays where, if we tackle and the guy doesn't fall forward, then it's not going to be a first down. Were we ready for it? No, we hadn't seen that play before, but I don't think that par-

ticular play hurt us a lot."

Q. In what areas has the Ohio State team improved since you came here four years ago?

COOPER: "I don't want to get into that. I don't want to answer that question."

Q. Just one more question. You're now 0-4 against Michigan since you came to Ohio State. Is it overdramatic to say that that's frustrating to you?

COOPER: "I would think it would be frustrating if you lose four years to Michigan."



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The Numbers Game

Wolverines 31, Buckeyes 3

OHIO STATE	0	3	0	0	3
MICHIGAN	7	17	7	0	31

UM — Legette, 1 run (Carlson kick) 9:54
 OSU — T. Williams, 50 field goal 12:32
 UM — J. Johnson, 1 run (Carlson kick) 8:25
 UM — Carlson, 37 field goal 6:22
 UM — Howard, 93 punt return (Carlson kick) 4:15
 UM — Wheatley, 5 run (Carlson kick) 4:01
 Att. — 106,156

	OSU	UM
First Downs	19	13
Rushing	8	9
Passing	8	4
Penalty	3	0
Rushes-Yards	52-109	39-198
Passing Yards	124	125
Passes	25-13-1	15-9-0
Plays	77	54
Total Net Yards	233	323
Third Down Efficiency	8-18	1-11
Punts	4-44.5	4-36.0
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	3-1
Penalties	5-30	8-75
Time Of Possession	33:54	26:06

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — OSU: Snow 24-54; S.Graham 7-23; Bynote 6-11; Harris 4-9; Galloway 1-8; Herbstreit 4-5; Cothran 1-3; K.Graham 5-(-4). UM: Wheatley 12-79; J. Johnson 11-61; R.Powers 8-35; McThomas 5-14; Howard 1-8; Legette 2-1.

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — OSU: K.Graham 14-5-1-42-0; Herbstreit 11-8-0-82-0. UM: Grbac 14-8-0-123-0; Sollow 1-1-0-2-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — OSU: Snow 4-33; Ellis 3-37; Stablein 2-24; Edwards 1-17; Galloway 1-11; S.Graham 1-7; Bynote 1-(-5). UM: Howard 3-96; VanDyne 2-24; J. Johnson 1-8; McThomas 1-2; Wheatley 1-1; R.Powers 1-(-6).

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Lg.) — OSU: T. Williams 4-44.5-50. UM: Azcona 4-36.0-41.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Avg.-Lg.) — OSU: Stablein 1-0-0-0. UM: Howard 1-93-0-93.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Avg.-Lg.) — OSU: Lee 4-11.8-24; Snow 2-16.0-20. UM: Howard 1-16.0-16; Washington 1-1-0-1.

DEFENSIVE FUMBLES RECOVERED BY — OSU: M. Williams. UM: Anderson, Williams.

INTERCEPTIONS — OSU: None. UM: Dottin.

TACKLES FOR LOSS — OSU: Walton, Harper, M. Williams, Kacherski. UM: Anderson (3), Townsend (3), Stanley, Evans, Aghakhan.

TACKLES (Solo-Assist-Tot.) — OSU: Tovar 6-3-9; Harper 8-0-8; Walton 5-0-5; Spellman 4-1-5; Nelson 3-2-5; Kacherski 4-0-4; Patillo 3-0-3; M. Williams 2-1-3; Herman 2-1-3; Frimel 2-1-3; Simmons 2-0-2; Gurd 1-1-2; Lease 1-0-1; Foster 1-0-1; DeGraffenreid 1-0-1; G. Smith 0-1-1. UM: Anderson 16-1-17; Townsend 10-0-10; Morrison 4-3-7; Walker 4-2-6; Williams 5-0-5; Evans 5-0-5; C. Wallace 4-1-5; Aghakhan 3-2-5; Stanley 3-1-4; Brown 2-1-3; Dyson 2-1-3; Ritter 2-0-2; Marshall 2-0-2; Ware 1-1-2; Dottin 1-1-2; Henderson 1-0-1; M. Davis 1-0-1; B. Powers 1-0-1.

Players In The Game

OHIO STATE — M. Williams, Spellman, G. Smith, Frimel, Kacherski, Simmons, Tovar, B. Johnson, Herman, Lease, Walton, Paulk, Harper, Nelson, Taylor, Patillo, Stablein, Galloway, Edwards, Ellis, Saunders, Metzger, Kline, Hartman, Long, Monnot, R. Smith, Bean, Winrow, K. Graham, Herbstreit, Snow, Bynote, Harris, S. Graham, Cothran, T. Williams, Lee, Dully, Beatty, Paul, Brown, Gurd, Borchers, Kerner.

MICHIGAN — Howard, Malveaux, Doherty, Skene, Matt Elliott, Manning, Steve Everitt, Millia, Cocozzo, Miller, Skrepenak, Wallace, McGee, Burkholder, VanDyne, Smith, Grbac, Sollow, Legette, McThomas, R. Powers, Wheatley, J. Johnson, Townsend, Davis, Evans, Marshall, Aghakhan, Henderson, Stanley, Dudlar, Simpson, Dyson, Stark, Anderson, B. Powers, Morrison, Walker, Ware, Williams, Maloney, Brown, Ritter, Dottin, Burch, Wallace, Carlson, D. Johnson, Holdren, Blankenship, Dobreff, Washington, Miller, Azcona, Marc Elliott.

OSU Season Statistics

RUSHING	ATT	GAIN	LOST	NET	AVG	TD	LG	OPP	OSU
Carlos Snow	159	797	25	772	4.9	8	39	FIRST DOWNS	196
Butler By'not'e	147	669	38	631	4.3	5	57	Rushing	82
Scottie Graham	63	383	13	370	5.9	5	65	Passing	101
Raymont Harris	69	312	17	295	4.3	2	16	Penalty	13
Jeff Cothran	40	267	2	265	6.6	2	39	AVERAGE PER GAME/RUSH	113.6
Kirk Herbstreit	23	201	18	183	8.0	2	72	AVERAGE PER GAME/PASS	209.5
Joey Galloway	2	29	0	29	14.5	0	21	AVERAGE PER PLAY/PASS	6.8
Dante Lee	2	9	0	9	4.5	0	7	TOTAL OFFENSE	3555
Doron Brown	3	8	1	7	2.3	0	5	Total Plays	729
William Houston	3	3	0	3	1.0	2	2	Average Per Game	323.2
Joe Pickens	2	1	2	-1	-	0	1	Average Per Play	4.9
Kent Graham	70	137	184	-27	-	1	13	PENALTIES-YARDS	55-410
"Team"	1	0	14	-14	-	-	-	Offense	38-239
OSU Totals	584	2836	314	2522	4.3	27	72	Defense	12-126
OPP Totals	390	1626	376	1250	3.2	8	53	Special Teams	5-45

Sacks: K. Graham 23-144, Herbstreit 3-16

PASSING	ATT	COMP	INT	YARDS	PCT	TD	LG	OPP	OSU
Kent Graham	153	79	6	1018	.516	4	44	FUMBLES-LOST	20-9
Kirk Herbstreit	43	24	3	311	.558	1	39	THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	45-149
Joe Pickens	5	1	0	34	.200	0	34	Percentage	.302
Tim Williams	1	1	0	21	1.000	0	21	FOURTH DOWN EFFICIENCY	10-19
OSU Totals	202	105	9	1384	.520	5	44	Percentage	.526
OPP Totals	339	194	10	2305	.572	9	61	SACKS AGAINST	33-223

RECEIVING	NO	YARDS	AVG	TD	LG	OPP	OSU
Bernard Edwards	25	364	14.6	2	39	Tim Williams	-31-33
Brian Stablein	25	363	14.5	0	32	Carlos Snow	8
Cedric Saunders	10	154	15.4	1	27	Butler By'not'e	5
Carlos Snow	10	49	4.9	0	11	Scottie Graham	5
Jeff Ellis	8	118	13.1	1	24	Herman Edwards	2
Joey Galloway	8	167	20.9	1	44	Raymont Harris	2
Butler By'not'e	6	27	4.5	0	35	William Houston	2
Dante Lee	4	56	14.0	0	24	Kirk Herbstreit	2
Raymont Harris	3	16	5.3	0	10	Jeff Cothran	2
Scottie Graham	2	12	6.0	0	7	Joey Galloway	1
Jeff Cothran	1	22	22.0	0	22	Kent Graham	1
Foster Paulk	1	21	21.0	0	21	Roger Harper	1
Allen DeGraffenreid	1	15	15.0	0	15	Cedric Saunders	1
OSU Totals	105	1384	13.2	5	7	Jason Simmons	(def. extra point blocked kick return) 2
OPP Totals	194	2305	11.9	9	61	Sieve Tovar	(def. extra point interception return) 2

PUNTING	NO	YARDS	AVG	TB	120	BK	LG	OPP	OSU
Tim Williams	48	1834	38.2	2	15	0	70	OSU Totals*	33 31 33
Joel Kessel	2	64	32.0	0	0	0	34	OPP Totals**	78 11 74 24 12-17 163
OSU Totals	50	1898	38.0	2	15	0	70	* includes defensive extra point interception (96 yds)	
OPP Totals	56	2058	36.8	3	16	1	58	** includes safety	

FG DISTANCE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	TOTAL	FIELD GOAL DISTANCE	(9-15, 600)
Tim Williams	3-4	3-5	2-5	1-1	9-15	Tim Williams	(9-15, 600) A7, 26+; LV 32, 36+; W5 47-
OSU Totals	3-4	3-5	2-5	1-1	9-15	27+, WI 41+, IL 24+, MSU 44-, 22+, 42+, MN 32-, IND	35+, 38+, MICH 46-, 50+
OPP Totals	2-3	4-6	5-7	1-1	12-17		

KICKOFF RETURNS	NO	YARDS	AVG	TD	LG	PUNT RETURNS	NO	YARDS	AVG	TD	LG
Carlos Snow	13	254	19.5	0	37	Brian Stablein	18	154	8.6	0	24
Dante Lee	11	191	17.4	0	31	Walter Taylor	7	63	9.0	0	19
Raymont Harris	4	43	10.8	0	15	Dante Lee	0	7	0	7	7
Butler By'not'e	2	51	25.5	0	23	OSU Totals	25	234	9.0	0	24
Jeff Ellis	1	-3	-	-	-	OPP Totals	19	202	10.7	1	93
OSU Totals	31	536	17.3	0	37						
OPP Totals	44	857	19.5	0	47						

Defensive Statistics

DEFENSE	SOLO	AST	TOT	TAC-LOSS	QB-SACK	PBU	FC	FR	TDS	BK
Steve Tovar (1)	53	34	87	5.0-14	1.0-8	2	1	-	-	-
Brian Stablein	38	28	66	13.0-44	3.0-24	-	-	1	-	-
Greg Smith	27	33	60	9.0-35	4.0-28	-	1	1	-	1/EP
Roger Harper	44	15	59	6.0-17	1.0-1	3	2	-	-	-
Bryan Cook	38	18	56	2.0-12	1.0-5	2	1	-	-	-
Rich Primel	33	21	54	7.0-29	2.5-23	1	1	-	-	-
Alonso Spellman	25	22	47	9.0-45	3.0-27	3	1	-	-	-
Chico Nelson	30	16	46	-	-	6	1	-	-	-
Jason Simmons (2)	31	10	41	15.5-90	9.5-60	2	1	1	-	-
Tim Walton	28	11	39	1.0-2	-	3	-	-	-	-
Foster Paulk	23	8	31	1.0-2	-	2	-	-	-	-
John Kacherski	22	9	31	6.0-24	3.0-19	2	3	-	-	-
Brent Johnson	21	10	31	3.0-9	1.0-1	-	-	2	-	-
Tom Lease	16	11	27	3.5-8	1.0-5	1	-	1	-	-
Mark Williams	16	9	25	4.0-15	2.0-13	1	-	2	-	-
Andy Gurd	11	8	19	2.0-10	1.0-9	1	-	-	-	-
Derrick Foster	11	4	15	1.0-1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tim Patillo	7	7	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Walter Taylor	6	5	11	-	-	3	-	-	-	1/PT
Tio Paul	6	4	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Marlon Kerner	5	3	8	-	-	2	-	1	-	-
Jim Borchers	1	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Joe Metzger	2	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Matt Bonhaus	3	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Alex Rodriguez	3	0	3	1.0-2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Allen DeGraffenreid	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dante Lee	1	0	1	1.0-15	-	-	-	-	-	-
Randall Brown	0	0	0	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

One Solo and One Assist Tackle - Tim Williams, Cedric Saunders
 One Solo Tackle-Pass Beckman, Paul Long, Kirk Herbstreit, Aaron Payne
 One Assist Tackle-Kent Graham, Jason Winrow, Jon Berger, Brad Pope, Scottie Graham
 (1)Defensive extra point interception return of 96 yards for score (2)Defensive extra point kick return of 85 yards for score

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BSB Quotebook: Michigan 31, Ohio State 3

Ohio State head coach John Cooper's assessment of the game: "I don't think it's an understatement to say that we are extremely disappointed. Michigan was every bit as good as advertised. But, when you give a good football team the opportunities we gave them and make the mistakes we made, that makes it awful tough to beat them."

Michigan head coach Gary Moeller's assessment of the game: "If you're asking me if I'm happy, the answer is yes. Before this season began, I really didn't know where my leadership was going to come from. But some of these upperclassmen have taken it upon themselves to become leaders and we have had an excellent season."

OSU sophomore linebacker Jason Simmons on his frustration after the loss: "We got our butts kicked. That's about as simple as I can make it. We didn't play well in any phase of the game. There's really nothing else I can say."

Michigan senior linebacker Brian Townsend on teammate Desmond Howard: "When he ran back that punt return, I was standing on the sideline, thinking to myself, 'I'm going to have to get that man's autograph for my kids,' so I can prove to them someday that I played with him. There's nothing that man can't do."

OSU senior linebacker Andy Gurd on the effect of Howard's punt return on the Buckeyes: "There was a great deal of frustration after the return. My freshman year, we came back from 13-0 at halftime to win, and three years ago, we were down by 20 points and we almost won the darn game. There really wasn't a point in the game until maybe the fourth quarter that it looked like a never-winning battle."

OSU senior linebacker John Kacherski on Howard: "I think it's obvious that he's a great talent. I can appreciate the talent that he has. He showed that today and he's showed that all season. The only thing that really bothers me about him is that he's from Ohio and he's playing for Michigan."

OSU defensive coordinator Bill Young on Howard's performance against the Buckeyes: "I'll tell you what. He's better than what I thought he was, and I thought going in he was the Heisman Trophy winner. He made a couple of catches today that were just unreal. He is a bona fide player."

Michigan junior quarterback Elvis Grbac on what it's like to play with Howard: "I've been watching him for a lot of years now and, really, nothing he does surprises me anymore. These great runs, great catches. You see him do it so many times, you just come to expect it from him."

OSU sophomore long snapper Jim Borchers on trying to corral Howard on his long punt return: "I saw him coming and I tried to get my arm out to sweep his legs. But I don't think he ever got off balance. You just can't let a guy like that get out in the open. Once he breaks free, he's awful tough to bring down."

Michigan junior split end Desmond Howard on the final margin of victory for the Wolverines: "The point margin surprises me. I thought it would be a much tougher scoring game as far as that was concerned. But it wasn't easy. It was rough for four quarters. Today, they had double coverage on me for most of the game, especially on the goal line. That must be their base defense because they said they weren't going to change their defense for me."



Jason Simmons



Andy Gurd



John Kacherski



Jim Borchers

OSU offensive coordinator Elliot Uzelac on the Buckeyes' turnovers: "The turnovers really turned the thing around and hurt us badly and took us out of our offense. We had two turnovers right in succession and then the long punt return, and that really helped them and hurt us. We helped them out too much."

Michigan senior linebacker Erick Anderson explaining his recovery of a Carlos Snow fumble near the goal line: "We were in a defense where the ball is supposed to bounce and it did. Somebody got their hand on it and it squirted down to the ground. Actually, it was between (teammate) Otis' (Williams) legs and I just grabbed it."

Michigan senior strong safety Otis Williams on the same play: "I was just running to the ball, and all of a sudden, it popped out. The hit was made by (Brian) Townsend. I had the ball, and then Erick came in and got it. That's OK, just as long as we got the ball."

OSU junior quarterback Kirk Herbstreit on the play that knocked him out of the game: "I'm really not sure what happened. Somebody got me from behind, I guess. I don't remember too much about the play. I thought we were moving the ball pretty well in the second half, but we couldn't make anything out of it."

Cooper on the reasons that led him to replace starting quarterback Kent Graham with Herbstreit in the second half: "I thought Kent was maybe holding the ball a little too long a couple of times. Then, I didn't like the last play of the first half. There was only one second left before halftime and he took a sack. We just wanted to make a change and see if Kirk could give a spark to the team. And I thought he did that until he got hurt."

Michigan senior tackle Greg Skrepenak on his comments preceding the game that degraded Cooper's record at OSU: "I never wanted to say that he is a bad coach or that he prepares his team poorly. I was just saying that he was taking his lumps early because he was new to this league. I think he's a good coach."

Kacherski on the criticism that the Buckeyes have not won a Big Ten championship in several years: "Ohio State is never going to be a (sleeper) team. We're not going to be able to sneak up on anybody the way some other teams have done. Everybody shoots for us. We're making progress and it's going to start to show."

OSU sophomore place-kicker Tim Williams on his 50-yard field goal that provided the Buckeyes with their only points in the game: "I didn't think I hit that one as well as I hit the (46-yard attempt) I missed (earlier in the game). But, I'll take it."

Moeller on a national championship playoff system: "I like the idea of guys sitting around eating sandwiches and arguing about whose team is best. You've got a lot of number ones, a lot of winners. There's enough pressure on the coaches and the kids and taking them out of class even more. (The playoff) just isn't feasible."

Cooper's final thoughts on the loss and the team's upcoming appearance in the Hall of Fame Bowl: "We are very disappointed about the outcome of this game. But we played hard this year and I'm proud of the way we've hung in there. We're 8-3, and while we're certainly not satisfied with that record, I imagine there are a lot of teams around the nation that would like to be 8-3 right now. What we want to do now is work hard and win our bowl game and use it as a springboard to next season."

*OSU Players Admit UM Star Should Win Heisman***Howard's Return Broke Backs Of Bucks**

By Mike Wachsman
and Mark Rea

If you give Desmond Howard a foot, he'll take 93 yards.

That was about the size of the opening Ohio State gave him on a second-quarter punt return, and it is the distance he covered on a return that was the longest in Michigan history.

"It happened so fast," Howard told reporters after the game. "I really wasn't supposed to catch it. I thought about a fair catch. They were all too close. They were coming for me, but then, this is the Ohio State game."

It may have also been the final nail in OSU's coffin in a 31-3 loss to the Wolverines Nov. 23 in Ann Arbor. And it may have been the final feat that put Howard over the top as far as the Heisman Trophy voting is concerned.

Most of the principal players involved in the contest agreed that Howard got their vote.

"Oh, my God, yes. If he's not, I'd like to meet the guy who is," said OSU long snapper Jim Borchers, who had a shot at bringing Howard down on the long punt return. "I was going for his legs because I saw him breaking free, and he made a good cut. I got an arm on him, but you can't arm-tackle that guy. I don't even think he was ever off stride when I hit him."

Senior tailback and co-captain Carlos Snow added, "He should get it. He's got to be number one. He's just phenomenal."

Michigan head coach Gary Moeller summed it up pretty well when he said, "If I was voting for the Heisman, I'd mark Desmond down 10 times."

After the game, Ohio State head coach John Cooper fought through a crowd of players to congratulate Howard on his performance.

"Cooper came out on the field and extended to me his congratulations," Howard said. "I thought that was a great gesture on his part."

Cooper later told reporters, "In my opinion, it shouldn't even be a contest



Ohio State defender Tito Paul (9) grabs in vain at the heels of Michigan kick returner Desmond Howard (21) during action in Michigan Stadium Nov. 23. Howard accounted for 213 all-purpose yards in the game, including a 93-yard punt return for a touchdown, to help UM to the victory.

who the Heisman Trophy winner is. It's Desmond Howard."

The best news of all for Michigan fans, and bad news for everyone else, is that Howard plans to return next year to try and equal Archie Griffin's record of two Heismans.

"I think I'll definitely be back," Howard said. "I like playing for Coach Moeller. It's fun playing for him. Plus, I want to get my degree, then work on my master's."

WHEN HOWARD got to the end zone after the long return, he looked up at the crowd, tucked one leg up and threw his free hand straight out in celebration.

"I told my friends from Ohio that if I got into the end zone, I'd do something special for them," said Howard, a graduate of Cleveland St. Joseph.

When reporters asked him if that was his Heisman pose, Howard replied, "It was supposed to be."

Later, when asked if he thought he had the Heisman Trophy sewed up, Howard said he would take nothing for granted.

"It's not right for me to be standing here saying I've won it," he said. "I haven't won anything yet. I don't vote on it. Sure, I'd love to win it. Every player who plays college football dreams of winning the Heisman Trophy some-

day. It would be great to win it, but there are a lot of other great players, too."

MICHIGAN OFFENSIVE tackle Greg Skrepenak got himself into some hot water in the days leading up to the game when he took a swipe at Cooper's record in the Big Ten and guaranteed the Wolverines would win.

After the game, the 6-8, 325-pounder admitted he had ulterior motives for making those comments.

"There were two reasons I did that," said Skrepenak. "I wanted to say something, then go out and do it. Plus, I wanted to put pressure on my teammates. I did put pressure on them and they responded."

"The other thing I did that I didn't want to do was (bleep) off Ohio State. I didn't want to downgrade their program, but I did feel like we'd beat them. I don't want to take anything away from their team because they're a great team."

While nearly everyone was up in arms about Skrepenak's comments, Moeller said he didn't really give them a second thought.

"Everybody blew Skrep's comments out of proportion," the UM head coach said. "He'd better say we were going to win. If he said we were going to lose, I'd better get a new tackle."

Moeller had some seemingly inflammatory comments of his own, indicating that the OSU-Michigan game was not necessarily the biggest one on the Wolverines' schedule.

"Really, when you start talking about rivalries, it's hard to say that the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry isn't one of the biggest in the country, and it is," Moeller said.

"Yet, in my thinking as a coach, and what I try to get across to my players is that our biggest game is Michigan State each year because it's in-state, obviously, and that means a lot to us."

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Players Praise Decision To Extend Pact

Continued From Page 1

Pressed on the issue of releasing the statement prior to the Michigan game, Jones replied, "Why not today? It appeared to be coming together. Why not today? What day is more appropriate than any of the others? For one thing, this sends a message that the decision is not based upon winning or losing to the University of Michigan."

"Don't get me wrong. It's not that I don't want to beat the University of Michigan. It's not that I don't enjoy winning. But we all have to keep everything in perspective."

Gee was not in attendance at the game, reportedly staying in Columbus to be with his wife, who is battling cancer. However, Theodore S. Celeste, a member of the OSU board of trustees who was in attendance, told reporters he did not foresee any problems the board would have granting the extension.

"It's an important issue to get behind us and move on," Celeste said. "I think there is a lot of potential with what the program has today and the way it's going."

Although he was not involved in the process four years ago that led to the firing of Earle Bruce the week before the Michigan game, Jones admitted that public relations disaster did have some effect on his decision.

"I think it's only prudent, when you sit in my seat, to reflect on all the things that have gone on before in the program," Jones said. "So, I could not look you in the eye and say (the Bruce firing) had no effect."

Cooper was reportedly told about the extension by Jones at the team hotel the night before the game. The coach told reporters he chose to keep the news from his players, but he told reporters after the 31-3 loss to the Wolverines that he felt like a burden had been lifted from him.

"I've been on pins and needles all season," Cooper said. "It's been a hectic season. I don't ever want to go through another season like this in my coaching career."

"Obviously, I'm happy to have my contract extended. I'm happy for our coaching staff. I feel like we've made improvement. Maybe it didn't show today, but I feel like we have made improvement."

"Ohio State University is a class act, it's a great university and, obviously, I appreciate the support I've gotten from Dr. Gee and the board (of trustees) and Jim Jones, in particular. Every day I work at Ohio State, I'm more impressed with everything about it. It's a great school, it's a great academic school and we're doing the right things in football. We're running an honest program, a clean program, and I think we're getting better. But we still have a long way to go."

In the wake of the loss to Michigan, many reporters who cover the Buckeyes on a regular basis lambasted the university for the extension and Jones in particular for the timing of the announcement.

But nearly all of the Ohio State players welcomed the decision.

"I think it's great," said sophomore linebacker Jason Simmons. "What we need is continuity. What we need is some stability around here, and coach-



Ohio State head coach John Cooper gestures toward an official on the sideline during the OSU-Michigan game. Cooper argued with officials on a play in which he thought a fumble should have been awarded to the Buckeyes and was not. Shortly before Michigan's 31-3 victory over the Buckeyes, university officials announced Cooper's contract had been extended through the 1995 season.

ing changes every couple of years isn't going to get that. I'm glad that he got an extension. He deserves it, and it's best for the team."

Senior tailback Carlos Snow, who was originally recruited by Bruce, said that many people are wrong for blaming Cooper for the team's downfalls this year.

"You can't blame the coaches for the losses," Snow said. "We know that when we execute our plays, and play well, Ohio State will win. When we don't, we lose. You can't get into 'Coach Cooper

did this wrong' or 'Coach Cooper made the wrong call' or stuff like that."

"He's a good coach. He's a great coach in my opinion and I'm happy for him. He will change this program around very fast."

Senior linebacker John Kacherski, another player brought to Columbus by Bruce, said he thought the extension came a year later than it should have.

"If he had (been extended last year)," Kacherski said, "I think a lot of people would have been playing for us that are on the Michigan team."

Sophomore defensive back Tim Walton added, "We're glad he's coming back. We don't want a new coach in here. We want Coach Cooper back here. We're going to win a Rose Bowl before he leaves."

Junior linebacker Steve Tovar told reporters that the announcement took some of the sting out of the loss for him.

"It really brightens my day," he said. "There is no finer coach than Coach Cooper. We lost to Michigan and that hurts, but knowing he's going to be around really helps out."

Ohioans Populate UM Roster

Continued From Page 1

him. Elvis Grbac was not as highly recruited as Howard, but since Howard was such a blue chip prospect, taking Grbac was something Michigan was prepared to do.

Shift ahead to the 1991 Ohio State-Michigan game, and one can easily see what kind of return the Wolverines received on snatching just two native Ohioans.

Howard accounted for 213 all-purpose yards, including a school-record 93-yard punt return in the second quarter that all but broke the back of the Buckeyes.

Meanwhile, Grbac was directing the potent Michigan offense to 323 yards by completing eight of 14 passes for 123 yards.

Another Ohioan, tailback Ricky Powers of Akron, had only 35 yards on eight carries against the Buckeyes, but he has had a 1,000-yard season.

And Howard, Grbac and Powers were only three of several Ohio natives playing in the game wearing the maize

and blue. Outside linebacker Brian Townsend, a product of Cincinnati Northwest, registered 10 solo tackles in the game.

Strong safety Otis Williams, who went to high school at Canton Glen Oak, had five tackles and recovered Carlos Snow's fumble in the second quarter, setting up a field goal for the Wolverines that made the score 17-3 at the time.

Townsend and Williams were recruited by Schembechler in 1987, when Bruce was still head coach of the Buckeyes.

However, there are more Ohio-born players ready to take the places of Howard, Grbac, Townsend and Williams in the coming years — tight end John Jaekin and defensive lineman Trent Zenkewicz of Cleveland, offensive lineman Paul Barry of Cincinnati and defensive lineman Sylvester Stanley of Youngstown, just to name a few.

Speaking on his weekly television show, Cooper said the Buckeyes will not be able to close the gap on the field with the Wolverines until they stop letting native sons escape to Michigan.

"We cannot afford to continue to let

Ohio players get away," said Cooper. "I'm sick and tired of Ohio players going to Michigan or Penn State or Notre Dame or wherever."

Cooper added that the opportunities for greatness, both athletically and academically, are excellent at Ohio State.

"I can't understand why anyone who is from Ohio would want to play anywhere else," he said.

Although he declined to comment about what kind of message his contract extension would send to prospective recruits, the message should be clear. With another pivotal recruiting season almost here, prospects know that Cooper will be at Ohio State at least through the 1995 season.

Should prospective players want to go elsewhere now, they will have to have other reasons. OSU will not go through another coaching change, therefore eradicating the scenario that led to Howard and Grbac winding up at Michigan.

The Buckeyes' rebuilding process appears to be over. Now, one of their prime recruiting directives will most likely be trying to prevent Michigan from reloading with ammunition produced in Ohio.

The View From 15th and High

By Frank L. Moskowitz, Publisher

Extension In Hand, Cooper Must Show He Deserves It

Oh, people of Missouri, please accept me as an honorary resident of your state. I have adopted your motto when it comes to John Cooper: "Show me."

That's all I've asked of Cooper this season — that he show me and Ohio State fans he can win the big games. I'm easily impressed and I believe in giving credit where credit is due. Show me there is reason to give that credit.

All of the squawking from me and OSU fans, not to mention some of my more cynical colleagues in the media, could have been put to rest with a win over Michigan. In fact, with a contract extension in hand and the Wolverines a heavy favorite, all Cooper really had to do was lead the Buckeyes to a respectable showing with Michigan.

Instead, the Buckeyes suffered their worst defeat against Michigan since 1946. Just add that to Cooper's resume, which now includes the first losing season at Ohio State since 1966, the first coach to lose to Michigan four straight times since Carroll Widdoes, Paul Bixler and Wes Fesler combined to do the trick from 1945-48, and his well documented poor record against winning and ranked teams, and you see why some Buckeye fans and observers are upset.

The counterargument you hear from Cooper backers and administrators is that the team is improving and is on the right track. I would certainly accept that theory if I saw some indication that the coaching staff could win the big games. Just show me.

Let me give you a little analogy. If BSB did a good job covering most stories, but every time there was a big story, say the Ohio State-Michigan game or grid recruiting, we did a poor job in our coverage, you wouldn't renew your subscription. That's the equivalent

OSU Wins Opener

Continued From Page 42

"But she says she sometimes gets overwhelmed and says, 'Wow, I really am playing college basketball,' something she says she's wanted to do since she was a little girl."

Bond did not score against James Madison and had one assist and three turnovers in 14 minutes of action.

"I think Erin needs to look for her shot a little more," Darsch said. "She didn't take her first shot until there were eight minutes to go in the game. That's something she needs to do because that's one of her strengths. That's how she can contribute to our team — scoring and rebounding."

The 6-0 forward from Hoffman Estates, Ill., scored two points and pulled down five rebounds in 23 minutes of action.

"I think there's something extra special about the first real game that was maybe a little different or a little added anxiety from the exhibition games," Darsch added. "But we're very pleased with what they've been doing so far. They're going to do some things that look like freshmen, but that's OK. That's how they're going to learn. I think they're getting valuable experience right now."

of not renewing our contract. Success in the newspaper business is measured not in improvement, but in how many papers and how much advertising you sell.

In big-time football, success is not measured in improvement, either. It's measured in wins and losses. Now there are those who will say that the Buckeyes had eight wins this season. It's not how many games the Buckeyes have won or lost. It's *which* games they've won or lost and how they've looked in those losses — mistake-plagued squeakers to Illinois and Iowa and the mistake-plagued blowout to the Wolverines.

The Michigan game is kind of a microcosm of the problem. There are those who would say that the team played fairly well against the Wolverines, especially on defense. They'll say that Michigan scored off good field position and on Desmond Howard's punt return, not off the defense. These same people will say that the offense moved the ball, holding it for long periods of time as the Buckeyes mounted several extended drives.

This is all well and good, but the final score (the bottom line in sports) was an extremely embarrassing 31-3. And this after the Wolverines had belittled Ohio State and the OSU-Michigan game all week. If that wasn't stimulus enough to motivate the team to a better performance, then what is?

In fact, I'm left wondering if Cooper had been fired before the Michigan game rather than having his contract renewed, would he have been able to rally his troops to a victory the way Earle Bruce did in his final game at OSU?

The contract is extended now. There's little reason to dwell on whether that was a good or bad decision because it's a decision that has been made. But please, John Cooper, show me that you can win the big games. Start with Syracuse in the Hall of Fame Bowl. Show me you can win the big games next season because if things continue the way they have been going, by this time next year, we'll be right back where we are now, only things will be even more unpleasant.

ONE OF the things Cooper has been accused of in the past is not understanding the tradition of Ohio State

football.

If his remarks at the annual Buckeye Boosters Huddle Luncheon the Friday before the Michigan game are any indication, he's learning. Athletic director Jim Jones had just explained the tradition of the gold pants going to each player who had beaten Michigan.

Cooper took the podium and indicated that he had beaten Michigan while he was at Arizona State but still wanted to earn a pair of gold pants.

"I want to pick up a pair of those pants on Monday morning," he told Jones. Unfortunately, he won't get them this year, but you can bet that first pair will be even sweeter if he can win them.

It's also been said that Cooper didn't know how to prepare his team for an OSU-Michigan game. Assistant coach Elliot Uzelac, who served two stints at

Michigan, does, though.

According to Cooper, Uzelac implemented some of the traditional tricks, with "Beat Michigan" signs everywhere at the Woody Hayes facility, Michigan jerseys on the floor and televisions constantly playing Michigan's games. Unfortunately, it didn't work. But I don't think stuff like that can hurt.

HOWARD PROVED to be every bit as good as advertised. I don't see how anyone else could even be in the running for the Heisman Trophy. This is definitely a player who can single-handedly affect the outcome of a game, as he proved against OSU.

I was a bit offended by his Heisman pose after his long punt return, though. I found it a little too much showboating for an Ohio State-Michigan game.

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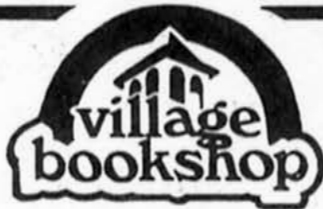
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