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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

September 18, 2004

Long Field Goal As Time Expires Carries OSU To 24-21 Win Over Marshall

By CHRIS NIDA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When Ohio State took control of the ball on its own 45-yard line with just 25 seconds to play and the score knotted at 21 with Marshall, it quickly became apparent that the Buckeyes' second game of the season would likely rest on the right leg of Mike Nugent.

That OSU ended up on the Thundering Herd's 37-yard line with two seconds to play — meaning the game-winning kick would be a career-long 55-yarder for Nugent if he connected — hardly mattered. The Buckeye kicker had been so automatic during the 2002 and '03 seasons while hitting nearly 90 percent of his field goals, including all three attempts from beyond 50 yards, that his teammates had no doubt he would win the Sept. 11 game for them.

"I knew it," senior defensive end Simon Fraser said. "The whole entire stadium knew it."

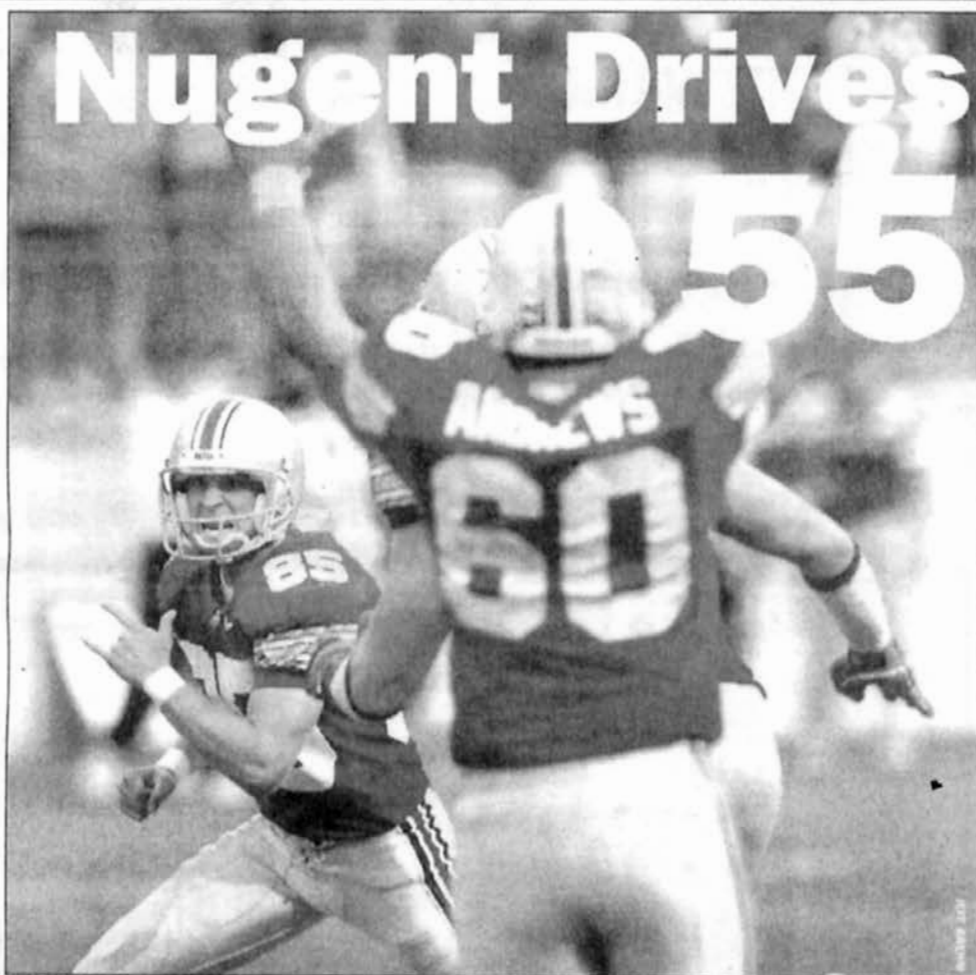
Once Nugent drove his leg through the ball solidly, one would think even the most doubting of Thomases would consider OSU's 24-21 victory a foregone conclusion. Except that after connecting with the pigskin, two thoughts ran through Nugent's mind — and neither of them was good.

The first concerned whether his ball would hang on and sneak inside the left upright.

"I don't know how other guys are when they hit a ball, but every time I hit a solid ball it goes back and forth a little bit," Nugent said. "It kind of scared me at first. First, it was going dead center and then it started going back in. I was just telling it to go in, and in that last second, it made it by about two inches."

Nugent's second thought took him back to the previous week's game against Cincinnati, when he barely missed a 53-yarder after initially thinking he had struck a good ball.

"Right when I hit this one, before I picked my head up, it was kind of like that 53-yarder I missed last week," the senior co-captain said. "Before I picked my head up I felt amazing about it, but this one, I kind of sat there before I picked my head up like, 'That felt good, but I missed the last one I thought I felt good on.' I looked up and it was going back and forth. Finally it



LOOK OF A CHAMPION — Ohio State kicker Mike Nugent (85) exults after booting a game-winning 55-yard field goal against Marshall. The senior tied an Ohio Stadium record for longest kick and staved off the Herd's bid for overtime.

just snuck in right at the end."

So did the Buckeyes, as they have so many times over the past two-plus seasons. The victory over Marshall followed the same script as most of those victories — an offense that came up big when it was needed, a strong defense that clamped down in the red zone and a continually solid effort by the special teams, specifically Nugent.

This game differed at the end, though. Believe it or not, throughout all of the Buckeyes' nail-biting victories, never before had Nugent or any of his teammates won a game on the final play — not that it mattered to anybody on the team when it came time to send Nugent out for the win.

"I was confident," head coach Jim Tressel said. "We've put him in that

In This Issue Of BSB

Got your heart rate down yet? If so, get ready to get your pulse jumping again as you relive Ohio State's thrilling, last-second victory over Marshall.

We have a full recap and all of the inside news from the 24-21 victory clinched when Buckeye kicker Mike Nugent booted a 55-yard field goal through the uprights as time expired.

After you read about the Marshall game, turn over to pages 28-30 and get ready for OSU's toughest test yet — a road trip to meet Chuck Amato's solid N.C. State squad.

Also in this week's edition, you'll get to know offensive lineman Mike Kne and student coach Angelo Chattams. We also have updates on the ticketing and tailgating situation at Ohio Stadium and review the first couple of weeks of instant replay.

As always, catch up on the latest on men's basketball and recruiting, and get updates on Ohio State's Olympic sports programs. It's all inside.

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OPINION

No End Of Tressel's Magic In Sight

"If it's to be, let it be me."
That was the supposed mantra of Ohio State football players during the John Cooper era. Simply put, it meant that if a big play was to be made, individuals were hoping they would be the ones to make it.

Unfortunately, that saying really didn't come into vogue until good ol' Coop rode off into the sunset and Jim Tressel came charging into town.

Nowadays, you get the feeling that members of the team don't only say those words, they truly believe them.

When Mike Nugent kicked a 55-yard field goal to propel OSU over Marshall on Sept. 11, he became the latest Buckeye to put himself on the line and make a game-winning play for Ohio State.

How many times has that happened in the past two years? You can't count them on the fingers of both hands anymore. The 24-21 victory marked the 14th time in the last 24 wins the Buckeyes have won by seven points or less.

Each time, a different player seems to come to the fore.

For two years in a row, it was Craig Krenzal at the Fiesta Bowl. Last year against Purdue, it was Mike Kudla who recovered a fumble in the end zone. It was Scott McMullen against Penn State, Will Allen against Bowling Green and San Diego State, and Michael Jenkins against North Carolina State.

In the years before Tressel got here, the Buckeyes weren't making those plays. In fact, rather than snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, it was decidedly the other way around.

Some of the most talented teams in recent Ohio State history have inexplicably stubbed their toes at the most inopportune times. The juggernaut of talent that passed through the OSU locker room from 1968-70 produced a national championship but undoubtedly should have produced three in a row. Losses to Michigan in 1969 and to Stanford in the 1971 Rose Bowl still leave those players scratching their heads nearly 35 years later.

Archie Griffin became the first player ever to start four Rose Bowls and remains the only two-time Heisman Trophy winner in history. During his junior year, his top-ranked Buckeyes lost to unranked Michigan State then followed that the next year by losing to UCLA in the Rose Bowl — the same team the Buckeyes had throttled 41-20 earlier that same season.

Certainly you remember the more recent debacles. The losses at Michigan in 1993, '95 and '97? How about the 28-24 home loss to Michigan State in '98? Another potential national title down the drain.

Since Tressel started overhauling the program, those famous belly flops have turned into soaring victories that leave the average Buckeye fan reaching for the Advil with one hand and the Pepto Bismol with the other.

I was standing in the opposite end zone when Nugent booted his 55-yarder to beat Marshall and heard the Ohio Stadium crowd erupt with delight — except it wasn't quite a volcanic eruption.

Maybe I'm just used to the noise now after so many narrow victories over the past couple of years that just one more

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

with

Mark Rea

eruption pales in comparison to so many that have come before. Or maybe the OSU faithful are just worn out.

Either way, the pulse-pounding victories have become a staple of Ohio State football under Tressel as his players look for new and innovative ways to win the game.

It's a refreshing mind-set these Buckeyes seem to have. Just as losing begets losing, winning is just as contagious — and this team seems to be severely afflicted.

Offense Coming Around

I'm beginning to really warm up to Justin Zwick as the Ohio State quarterback. I think the kid has obvious talents and needs only more experience to become a truly dangerous weapon for the Buckeyes.

After just two career starts, Zwick has completed 32 of 56 passes (57.1 percent) for 531 yards and four TDs. His decision-making is still somewhat suspect. He has the true quarterback's mentality of thinking he can complete any pass to any receiver no matter the coverage. And at least two of his four interceptions this year so far have been floaters that were easy catches for defenders.

But that kind of thing will disappear as Zwick matures in the position. I like his setup, I like his mentality and I like the way he operates the offense. As for the interceptions, I think we could all live without those and he's certainly not going to get away with throwing two every game.

But from what I've seen in just two games, I think he is going to live up to what was projected for him coming out of high school.

Along with Zwick's two interceptions and two other turnovers, there was plenty to criticize on the offensive side of the ball.

Ohio State clearly could not run the ball effectively against Marshall when it wanted to eat some time off the clock in the second half. Still, you look at the final stats and Lydell Ross somehow wound up with 90 yards. He still runs too much with his head buried and he still takes too long to make up his mind which direction he's going to go, but he remains an effective running back.

There is no doubt that he is better if he does not have to carry the entire load as he did against the Herd. But with fullback Branden Joe still out with an ankle injury and backup tailbacks Maurice Hall and Tony Pittman a little nicked up, Ross got all of the tailback carries against Marshall.

Once Joe returns to the lineup, I think the Buckeyes will improve in their running game. He is the best blocker among the fullbacks and he offers the added dimension of being able to run the ball as well as catch it coming out of the backfield.

The offensive line is still a work in progress, but it is getting better. The pass blocking is still ahead of the run

blocking, something on obvious display as the Buckeyes tried unsuccessfully to run against Marshall, which dared them to pass by putting eight men in the box. To Tressel's credit, he quickly abandoned his original game plan in the first half and went to the air often — with excellent results.

In the second half, as the Herd dropped into coverage to prevent Antonio Holmes from having a 400-yard day, the running game got a little better. In fact, the Buckeyes more than doubled their rushing output from the first half. They totaled only 55 yards in the second half on the ground, but it was still much better than the 24 they had in the first half.

As far as pass protection is concerned, the Buckeyes are already pretty good. In two games, Zwick has gotten off 56 passes and has been sacked only twice — once in each game. The sack he took against Marshall was a coverage sack and one when he had plenty of time to get rid of the ball.

Not As Bad As It Seemed

There was a lot to criticize on the defensive side of the ball against the Thundering Herd, especially since they had struggled so much against Troy in their opener.

Despite the fact that the Trojans are much improved at 2-0 with a win over ranked Missouri to their credit, I find it hard to believe their defense stacks up on par with Ohio State. Yet, there was the Herd, piling up chunks of yardage on drives of 12, 17 and 11 plays.

I also thought the tackling was extremely sloppy, so sloppy in fact that it made Marshall's players look faster than they really were. The Herd took advantage of overpursuit by the Buckeyes and cut back any number of times to gain extra yardage. Even when they didn't overpursue, OSU defenders tried to arm tackle, and you can't arm tackle any college player on the Division I-A level and expect to bring him down.

Even with those weaknesses exposed, a little deeper look into the defensive performance reveals that Marshall really scored only one touchdown against the unit. The Herd defense accounted for one score on Ross' fumble and set up the other with an interception, allowing their offense to move only 13 yards to get to the end zone.

Take out the three long drives and Marshall accounted for just 73 yards on 38 plays the rest of the game. That's an average of less than 2 yards per play, a stat that speaks for itself.

I still like this Ohio State defense. Did it get sloppy at times? Yes. Did it get back on its heels at times? Yes, it did, but so have other OSU defenses over the past 29 games. When it comes to crunch time, it usually rises to the occasion.

Twice against Marshall, the Herd was turned away inside the red zone with no points — including that 17-play drive which resulted in snuffing a fake field goal and the 11-play drive near the end of the game that wound up with MU missing a potential go-ahead field goal.

How they perform in the red zone still separates the great defenses from the merely good ones. OSU's is still evolving but seems to have the right idea. Yardage surrendered doesn't matter. Points do.

OHIO STATE VS. MARSHALL

OSU Avoids A MAC Truck

Bucks Survive Visiting Herd At Final Gun

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

A game that took more than 3 1/2 hours to play came down to a few frenzied seconds.

Ohio State moved a precious 17 yards in just 23 seconds near the end of its Sept. 11 game with Marshall, getting the football close enough for senior kicker Mike Nugent to blast a 55-yard field goal and provide the winning margin in a 24-21 slugfest.

Played on another hot afternoon that stretched into dusk, the game featured 13 penalties, 68 passes, 138 offensive plays and what seemed like at least that many television timeouts.

At the end of the marathon, though, the Buckeyes had dodged a bullet — as they so often have during the last two-plus seasons — and gave themselves a chance to grab the victory.

Marshall had a legitimate chance to take a 24-21 lead of its own with 3:17 remaining, but kicker Ian O'Connor yanked his 35-yard field-goal attempt wide to the left.

Nearly three minutes later, O'Connor again experienced a crucial gaffe, allowing a punt to go off the side of his foot. The kick traveled just 26 yards and gave the Buckeyes one last possession at their own 45-yard line.

Armed with just 25 seconds and no

timeouts, OSU quarterback Justin Zwick calmly connected with flanker Antonio Holmes on back-to-back sideline patterns, getting the Buckeyes to the Marshall 38.

Those plays took only eight seconds, but that's when things really got interesting. Zwick figured he had plenty of time to complete a quick pass over the middle, get Nugent a little closer and still have time to spike the ball and stop the clock.

He found tight end Ryan Hamby in the middle of a Marshall zone coverage, and Hamby gathered in the 5-yard completion. Trouble was, a couple of Marshall defenders on top of Hamby were in no particular hurry to get up.

"I thought we had plenty of time, but then I saw those guys not letting Ryan up," OSU center Nick Mangold said. "I kept looking at the clock then looking back at Ryan. I was beginning to wonder whether we were going to get the snap off in time."

Hamby finally got to his feet and got back on the Ohio State side of the line of scrimmage just as Mangold snapped the ball. Zwick quickly zipped it into the ground as the stadium clock read 0:02.

Unfortunately, Hamby had not had enough time to set himself on the line and was whistled for an infraction. Still, because the penalty was not a dead-ball foul, the incomplete pass play stood, leaving the Buckeyes time to get Nugent onto the field and lined up for the game winner.

As the senior kicker knocked the ball from the left hash mark, it hooked ever so slightly to the left but curled just inside the left upright to give Ohio State the victory.

As his teammates danced wildly all over the field, Nugent simply threw his hands in the air and then celebrated briefly with long snapper Kyle Andrews and holder Kyle Turano.



JEFF BRIDGMAN

NOT TODAY YOU DON'T — Marshall had designs on catching Ohio State napping when it tried a fake field goal in the third quarter. OSU linebackers Thomas Matthews (1) and Bobby Carpenter celebrate after the Herd's bit of trickery came up short.

Coming off the field, Nugent was hugged by his mother, Carolyn, but seemed unaffected by the bedlam surrounding him.

"I just did my job," he said with just a hint of a smile crossing his face. Just the same, he clutched a little memento from the winning kick — the game ball.

The victory preserved the Buckeyes' 18-game home winning streak, currently the longest in college football. It also pushed the team's record to 27-2 over the past 29 games. Almost amazingly, 14 of those victories have come by seven points or less — but none of them come courtesy of a last-second kick by Nugent.

The last time Ohio State won a game, on the final play of regulation was at Illinois in 2000 when Dan Stultz booted a 24-yard field goal as time expired. The final score that day was also 24-21 in favor of the Buckeyes.

"I can't really explain how we can win so many close games," said OSU senior tailback Lydell Ross. "We just do. We find a way. It's a mind-set, really, that we're somehow going to find a way."

"And through all of those close games, it's usually never the same way. We just get down to the end and have confidence we'll find a way. It happened again today. It looked like we were going down but we found a way."

Lightning Strike To Start

Early in the game, Ohio State looked as though it wouldn't have to worry about any late heroics from anybody.

With barely five minutes gone in the

first quarter, quarterback Justin Zwick threw a perfectly timed pass to flanker Antonio Holmes, and the speedy receiver turned it into an 80-yard touchdown romp.

"It was a pretty simple play, really," Holmes said. "All I had to do was beat the safety. The ball hit me right in stride and that was all she wrote."

Nugent added the PAT for a 7-0 OSU lead and then booted the ensuing kickoff out of the end zone.

But Marshall was undaunted. The Thundering Herd strung together a 12-play drive that featured plenty of quick-step drop passes from quarterback Stan Hill and other plays designed to exploit a hard-charging Ohio State defense.

Marshall faced only two third-down situations during the drive and finally culminated the 80-yard march with a 2-yard burst from tailback Earl Charles. O'Connor added the extra point for the 7-7 tie.

After that, the game settled into a seesaw battle that saw the Buckeyes take a lead only to have Marshall come back and tie it.

Zwick and Holmes connected again late in the second quarter, this time on a 47-yard touchdown play, giving the Buckeyes a 14-7 advantage at halftime.

But the Herd answered in the third period when linebacker Jonathan Goddard stripped Ross of the football as the OSU tailback was in a pileup and raced 27 yards for a touchdown.

The Buckeyes answered that score by taking the lead again on their next pos-

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OHIO STATE VS. MARSHALL

session. It was the Zwick-to-Holmes connection again, hooking up four times during an 80-yard drive that covered a total of 53 yards.

But when Marshall called a timeout — ostensibly to get a second defender on Holmes in coverage — Zwick switched off and found split end Roy Hall on a slant route for a 20-yard touchdown.

Fantastic Finish

After taking the 21-14 lead, the Buckeyes tried their best to give Marshall as many chances as possible to tie the score.

The Herd went on a 17-play, 83-yard drive that ate up more than nine minutes and most of the rest of the third quarter. But after pushing as far as the Ohio State 8-yard line, they came away empty on a fake field-goal attempt that was quashed easily by the OSU defense.

In the fourth quarter, it was the offense that got generous with Marshall. The Buckeyes committed three turnovers in the space of just 3 1/2 minutes. Holmes fumbled after another reception, then Zwick floated an interception into the arms of Herd safety Chris Royal.

Marshall couldn't cash in on Holmes' fumble but parlayed Royal's interception, 16-yard return and subsequent personal foul penalty against the Buckeyes into a possession at the OSU 13. On third-and-9, the Buckeyes stuffed a reverse but Marshall was called for holding. OSU decided to accept the penalty rather than force a field-goal attempt, and the Herd took advantage of their second chance.

Taking a page from Ohio State's playbook, Hill called for a slant pattern of his own and hit Brad Bates for a 23-yard pass that allowed the MU receiver to nick the pylon at the entrance to the end zone.

And OSU's benevolence wasn't over. On the very next play from scrimmage, Zwick was intercepted by Royal again, giving Marshall the ball at its own 41-yard line with 8:33 to play in the game.

Expecting the Herd to throw the ball, Ohio State was crossed up as Hill engineered a drive that almost exclusively stayed on the ground. The longest play of the drive was a 10-yard penalty on OSU for pass interference, but the Herd chewed up valuable clock time and positioned themselves for O'Connor and a 35-yard field-goal try. But the Marshall kicker missed that attempt, setting up the frenzy of the last few seconds.

Game Notes

- Nugent's 55-yard field goal was his career best and tied the all-time longest field goal by a Buckeye kicker in Ohio Stadium history. Stultz booted a 55-yarder against Indiana in 1997.

- The longest field goal in stadium history belongs to Morten Andersen of Michigan State, who booted one 63 yards through the uprights in 1981.

- The OSU record for longest field goal is held by three-time All-American Tom Skladany, who had a 59-yarder at Illinois in 1975. Second on that list are the 55-yarders by Nugent, Stultz and Gary Cairns, who had a 55-yard field goal at Illinois in 1966.

- Zwick finished with a career-high 318 yards passing and became only the 18th Ohio State quarterback in history to eclipse the 300-yard mark in a game.

- His effort ranks him 12th on the all-time list of best days by a QB. Art Schlichter holds the single-game mark with 458 yards against Florida State in 1981.

- Meanwhile, Holmes established new personal bests with 10 catches for 218

yards. He became only the fourth Buckeye receiver ever to top the 200-yard mark in a single game. The others are Terry Glenn (253 vs. Pittsburgh in 1995), Gary Williams (220 vs. Florida State in 1981) and David Boston (217 vs. Michigan in 1988).

- Holmes is the first sophomore to crack the 200-yard barrier in a game. Glenn, Williams and Boston all had their big games as juniors.

- The total of 10 catches also ties Holmes with several former Buckeyes for the 10th-best single-game effort in school history.

- Zwick's 80-yard touchdown pass to Holmes tied the tandem for the third-

longest scoring strike ever at Ohio State.

- Schlichter hooked up with Calvin Murray for an 86-yarder against Washington State in 1979, while Bob Hoying connected with Glenn for an 82-yard TD against Notre Dame in 1995.

- The Zwick-Holmes play tied a 1989 play from Greg Frey to Jeff Graham against Boston College and a 1961 pass from Joe Sparma to Bob Klein at Michigan.

- The game against Marshall served as the 20th time Ohio State has played a school currently in the Mid-American Conference.

The victory pushed the Buckeyes' to 19-1 all-time against MAC opponents. Their only loss was to Akron, a 14-6 decision that occurred in 1895.

- Marshall's leading rusher was tail-back Ahmad Bradshaw with 77 yards on 17 carries, meaning that OSU has not allowed an opposing player to crack the century mark in the Horseshoe in 20 straight games.


- The last opposing player to rush for 100 or more yards against the Buckeyes in Ohio Stadium was Larry Ned of San Diego State, who had 112 yards in his team's 27-12 loss in 2001.

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COVER STORY: NUGENT DRIVES 55

Nugent's Deflection Of Credit Splits Uprights

Continued From Page 1

Tressel said, "We've put him in that position many times in kick scrimmages — it's the last play of the game and here's what we've got to do. He's a great kicker. There's not a better one in college football and I think he proved that today."

Following the game, Nugent was loath to accept any credit for winning



JEFF BRIDGMAN

THAT'S SOME FANCY PASSING — Sophomore quarterback Justin Zwick became the first Ohio State signal caller to throw for 300 yards since Steve Bellisari did in the 2002 Outback Bowl. Zwick tossed three touchdown passes for the Buckeyes in the win over Marshall.

the game himself. As you might expect from a senior captain playing under Tressel, he portrayed himself as just one part of a team that was able to eke out another gutsy victory.

His efforts certainly shouldn't be overlooked, but there's little doubt that it took any number of Buckeyes — from senior captains to true freshmen — to put Nugent in position to make his own little bit of history.

The journey to the 55-yard game winner really began with 3:17 to play and the ball on Ohio State's 19-yard line. Marshall kicker Ian O'Connor pushed a field-goal try from the right hash far left, keeping the score tied at 21 and the general feeling in Ohio Stadium optimistic.

OSU's offense stalled on its next drive, giving the ball back to Marshall, but the defense took over from there. Marshall started its drive on its own 31-yard line with 1:36 to play, plenty of time to make it at least into field-goal range for a shot at knocking off the Buckeyes in the Horseshoe, but Mark Snyder's troops were having none of it.

Herd freshman running back Ahmad Bradshaw had success on the ground in the second half, tallying 13 yards on four carries on Marshall's previous drive, but on what would turn out to be the Herd's final series, OSU sent him

backward. On three tries on the ground, Bradshaw netted a loss of 2 yards.

That put O'Connor in a punting situation. The Buckeyes were looking to set up the return, but true freshman Devon Lyons got good pressure coming around the left end, contributing to O'Connor's shank that gave the Buckeyes the ball at their own 45 with 25 seconds to play.

Quarterback Justin Zwick and the offense took over from there. Operating without any timeouts, Zwick was efficient nonetheless, finding Antonio Holmes near the left sideline twice in succession for 17 yards. Holmes got out of bounds on each completion, no small feat for a player who sat out much of the third quarter due to cramping.

"The athletic move of the day was on the first completion when Antonio Holmes was able to get out of bounds," Tressel said. "How he stayed up and got out of bounds — that was the difference."

Zwick followed his completions to Holmes by finding tight end Ryan Hamby over the middle. It was something of a risky proposition with the clock ticking and the Buckeyes unable to stop the clock, but there should have been plenty of time to get lined up to spike the ball and give the field-goal unit a chance to get set.

"I thought we had plenty of time," Zwick said. "When I looked up at the clock, I think there was like eight seconds or something left for us to spike it."

The only problem was Hamby couldn't get back on the OSU side of the line. After middle linebacker Kevin Atkins took Hamby down, the Herd piled on and took their time getting off, preventing the Ohio State tight end from getting inside in a timely fashion. As a result, OSU snapped and spiked the ball before Hamby was set, resulting in an illegal shift penalty.

"Everyone knows that we're going up there to spike the ball and the ref was just kind of standing there," center Nick Mangold said. "I don't know what the procedure is on those kinds of things, but I know the guy laid on (Hamby) for like five seconds or so just letting the clock tick. It was kind of frustrating because you know as soon as he gets up we can spike the ball. But he wasn't letting him up and the ref was just kind of standing there watching it."

The resulting penalty pushed OSU from Marshall's 32-yard line back to the 37, though it wound up not meaning much to Nugent. His 55-yarder had plenty of distance to account for the victory.

An Ohio State offense that had struggled to find its rhythm in the second half executed to perfection when it had to, much like it had practiced in recent weeks. Offensive coordinator Jim Bollman said the Buckeyes routinely practice just the type of situation

the offense found itself in at the end of the game "more than you probably think," saying the team never went more than two practices in fall camp without the players being placed in that scenario.

"I knew that we had to move the ball down and get in field-goal range, and our guys did a great job of catching the ball, getting out of bounds and moving the ball downfield," Zwick said. "(I had) great protection and Antonio got out of bounds for us. We knew what we had to do and we did it."

Keeping With Tradition

It seemed fitting that Nugent would get a chance to win the game on the same day his friend and mentor, former Buckeye kicker Vlade Janakievski, was in the stadium and officially inducted into the university's Athletics Hall of Fame.

In fact, it might be safe to say that if the Buckeyes were going to turn to any one player on their team to win a game for them, Nugent would be that man.

Toward the end of fall camp, his teammates made him one of the rare kickers to be elected captain of a squad, and though junior linebacker Bobby Carpenter admitted later that he couldn't bear to watch the final kick, virtually all of Nugent's teammates showed the same faith in him that they had during the voting for captain.

"He made a great approach, he followed through the best way he knows how, and Coach Tressel always tells him — hit in between the uprights and hit the flagpole every time you kick it," Holmes said. "That's what he did."

Perhaps nobody on the team knows Nugent's capabilities better than linebacker A.J. Hawk, who was one class behind Nugent at Centerville (Ohio) High School and has been watching his former teammate mature since even before their days as Elks.

When asked how long he's been watching Nugent go at it, Hawk replied, "Forever. Since I was in second, third grade, he's been kicking. I know what he can do."

The rest of the world now knows as well. Nugent's kick will go down in the record books as one that tied the Ohio Stadium record for a Buckeye, but many of those who watched the kick live will remember that it appeared as if it would have been good from at least 10 more yards out.

"Apparently he can kick a 55-yarder with his eyes closed because it looked like he had plenty of range left," Mangold said. "Shoot, the whole field is pretty much his range."

Marshall head coach Bob Pruett was even more to the point when he said, "That was a long kick. I guess that's why he's an All-American."

Nugent is on a path to end his career as perhaps the premier kicker in Buckeye history. His relationship with Janakievski and his appreciation for the OSU tradition have made him aware of what he is poised to accomplish, but at least one kicker tradition — that familiar sight of a placekicker running aimlessly around the field in celebration of a game-winning kick — seems certain to die with him.

"That's kind of one thing I can't stand seeing guys do," Nugent said. "They'll hit a game-winning field goal and they'll start running around the field so all eyes are on them. The first thing I was thinking was, 'Where are my teammates?' I was just jumping and looking for them,

Fantastic Finishes

Here is a look at several of the most notable final-play scores that meant victory for the Buckeyes.

• **Nov. 11, 2000** — OSU 24, Illinois 21.

Fighting off injuries to starting tailback Derek Combs and receivers Reggie Germany and Ken-Yon Rambo, quarterback Steve Bellisari engineered a last-second drive and kicker Dan Stultz booted a 34-yard field goal as time expired to beat the Illini at Memorial Stadium. It was Stultz's fourth three-pointer of the game.

• **Nov. 8, 1947** — OSU 7.

Northwestern 6. An offside penalty by the Wildcats gave Ohio State an extra untimed down after time had expired. Pandej Savic threw a touchdown pass to James Clark to tie the game. Then, after Northwestern's block of OSU's extra-point kick was nullified by another penalty, the Buckeyes won after Emil Moidea booted the second try through the uprights. "I have talked to people who were at that game," said OSU football historian Jack Park. "They said the final gun had sounded and the band was on the field. They had to get the band off the field to finish the game. It was a very unusual ending."

• **Nov. 13, 1943** — OSU 29, Illinois 26.

Again, an offside penalty gave Ohio State an extra chance, although both teams had left the field and had to be called back. On the extra untimed down, OSU's Johnny Stungis booted the game-winning field goal. "They didn't come back to finish it until 10 or 20 minutes after the game," Park said. "A lot of people had left the game and, in those days, there was no TV or radio to tell you what had happened. People left the game thinking it was a tie then read that Ohio State had won in their Sunday paper."

• **Nov. 20, 1920** — OSU 7, Illinois 0.

Hoge Workman threw the winning touchdown to Truck Myers on the final play of regulation. Pete Stinchcomb booted the extra point for the 7-0 win.

There have been other "fantastic finishes" in recent OSU lore, although these did not involve scores on the final play.

• In 1990, Ohio State QB Greg Frey hit Bobby Olive for a touchdown with one second left. The PAT kick gave the Buckeyes a 27-26 win.

• In 1974, OSU fell 16-13 at Michigan State, although it appeared that Champ Henson had scored a touchdown on the final play. The officials took 30 minutes before ruling the Spartans had won the game.

• In 1962, Dick van Raaphorst hit a 27-yard field goal in the final eight seconds to give the Buckeyes a 10-7 win over Indiana.

• And in 1977, Oklahoma kicker Uwe von Schamann made a 41-yard field goal with three seconds left for a 29-28 win over the Buckeyes.

and the second thing I was thinking was, "Where's my snapper and my holder?"

"Those guys do such an unbelievable job. They really get no recognition. (Long snapper) Kyle (Andrews) gets no recognition for having a perfect snap every time. The other Kyle (holder Kyle Turano) gets no recognition for having a great hold. That's what I was looking for afterward. I was like, 'Where are both Kyles?'"

Despite the huge rush of a game-winning kick on the final play of the game, if Nugent has his way, neither he nor his teammates will ever be put in such a situation again.

"We want to go out there and win as many games as we can by as much as we can," he said. "If I'm kicking extra points for the rest of the season, that's fine with me."

OHIO STATE VS. MARSHALL



JEFF GREHM

THE GREAT SANTONIO — Santonio Holmes is quickly showing that he belongs in any discussion of the Big Ten's top receivers. The sophomore grabbed a career-high 10 passes for 218 yards and scored twice against Marshall.

Zwick Feels Right At Holmes In Offense

In what had been an extremely up-and-down game for Justin Zwick, the Ohio State sophomore quarterback remained on a remarkably even keel throughout, allowing him and the Buckeyes to finish on a high note.

Zwick threw for three touchdowns and 318 yards against Marshall, helping the Buckeyes to a 24-21 victory. The yardage figure was the 12th highest single-game total in OSU history and the most by a Buckeyes quarterback since Steve Bellisari threw for 320 yards in the final game of his career, the 2002 Outback Bowl.

All of Zwick's touchdowns — and 255 of his passing yards — came in the first half, when he was 10 of 18.

After completing his only two pass attempts of the third quarter, Zwick coolly hit two of his first three passes in the fourth quarter but was then intercepted by Marshall safety Chris Royal on consecutive throws.

The first one came at the 9:54 mark of the fourth quarter when Royal jumped a slant route meant for flanker Santonio Holmes and made the pick at the OSU 42. Royal returned the interception 16 yards and then a personal foul penalty against the Buckeyes pushed the ball all the way down to the 13. In just three plays, the Thundering Herd converted that turnover into the game-tying touchdown.

When Zwick attempted to go up top to Holmes again on his next throw, Royal came down with the ball at the Marshall 41. That possession ended with the Herd squandering a chance to go ahead with a missed field goal of 35 yards.

When Zwick got another chance to move his team into a winning position, he didn't falter. In fact, on the heels of

INSIDE THE OFFENSE with Eric Loughry

back-to-back picks, he appeared as comfortable as he had been in the first half.

When the Buckeyes got the ball back at their own 45-yard line with 25 seconds remaining and the game tied, Zwick calmly directed OSU ahead and into range close enough for kicker Mike Nugent to win it.

"That's going to happen," Zwick said matter-of-factly of the interceptions. "That happens to the best of us. You just have to come out when you get a chance to move the ball down the field for a field goal, forget about those two passes, and just move the ball as well as you can."

Working from the shotgun formation and without the benefit of any timeouts, the sophomore quarterback hit Holmes for gains of 9 and 8 yards along the sideline before finding tight end Ryan Hamby over the middle for 5 more yards as the clock ran down.

Zwick hurried the team up to the line of scrimmage and spiked the ball with just 0:02 showing on the stadium clock to allow Nugent a chance.

"I knew that we had to move the ball down and get in field-goal range, and our guys did a great job of getting out of bounds — catching the ball and getting out of bounds — and moving the ball downfield," Zwick said. "(I had) great protection and Santonio got out of bounds for us. We knew what we had to do and we did it."

On the final play before the kick, Hamby was slow to get up after his catch. Marshall defenders piled off of him slowly, and the OSU tight end didn't make it back in time to get set. Zwick alertly took the snap anyway and fired the ball into the turf. Hamby was whistled for an illegal shift and OSU was penalized 5 yards, negating the reception but still giving Nugent an opportunity.

Had Hamby been unable to get back on the OSU side of the line of scrimmage, the infraction would have been a dead ball foul and resulted in the remaining two seconds being run off the clock.

Either way, Zwick was going to do what he could do to keep the game from going into overtime.

"You have to give him credit for having the presence of mind right there," said junior center Nick Mangold. "We were scurrying around and it seemed like forever until (the officials) set the ball. But Justin was cool and spiked it as soon as he got it. That helped get Mike on the field to win it in regulation."

Zwick shrugged off the play as "something I need to be aware of as a quarterback." He also didn't seem daunted by his mistakes, but he wouldn't mind cutting down on them.

"I felt comfortable throughout the whole game pretty much," he said. "I came in and tried to be relaxed about everything, and I felt that I was and we moved the ball."

"But we've got to do a better job of keeping it in our hands and not having the other team's defense have it."

Holmes said he has already noticed a progression in his quarterback. "He's starting to get a little more

poise, a little more confidence," the sophomore flanker said. "Our offensive line is really helping him out, and as receivers, we're coming through for him."

Zwick earned heaps of praise from Marshall head coach Bob Pruett.

"The kid came in there and passed efficiently," Pruett said. "He made some great plays, especially in the first half."

Continued On Page 12



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OHIO STATE VS. MARSHALL

Continued From Page 11

Then he had the poise he needed at the end for them. For a sophomore who's making his — what? — second career start, I thought he did a real good job for them."

Big Day For Holmes

Not only was Holmes on the receiving end of Zwick's late passes, he was almost all of the offense in the early going with a pair of touchdown catches.

For the game, Holmes established career highs with 10 receptions for 218 yards. The total was just 35 off the OSU record for a single game of 253, set by Terry Glenn against Pittsburgh in 1995.

Holmes might have easily shattered the record had he not missed most of the third quarter with cramps. He was carted off the field and received IV fluids in the locker room before returning early in the final period.

"I was cramping up real bad," he said of playing on another hot afternoon in Ohio Stadium. "My whole body was shut down, but fortunately after the third quarter I came back to help my team win."

He did plenty to help before he left, too.

On the first play of OSU's second possession of the game, Zwick found Holmes deep on a post route for an 80-yard touchdown. Lining up off the line on the right side, Holmes simply dashed past the Marshall secondary, and his quarterback hit him perfectly

in stride.

"We knew their safeties were playing down a little bit on us the first series," Zwick said. "So we came out and wanted to see if we could get (Santonio) behind their DBs and we did. We were able to connect with him and he took over after the catch."

Holmes actually had gone to OSU head coach Jim Tressel and told him that play would be there.

"I had told him that I thought that would be my favorite play to run in the game today and that I thought it would be open," the receiver said. "I really thought we could cheat (on their coverage) a little bit and hit one over the top. That's what happened."

After Marshall tied the score at 7, Zwick and Holmes connected again, this time for a 47-yard touchdown with just 18 seconds remaining in the first quarter.

"We kind of knew what they wanted to do — they wanted to keep some safeties down in the box for run support," Zwick said. "With that, we just wanted to get behind them and we were able to do that a couple of times. And we did a great job of making some great catches and putting it in the end zone."

OSU's third score came on a 20-yard pass from Zwick to Roy Hall late in the first half. The bulk of yardage on the drive came courtesy of Holmes, who had four catches for 53 yards during the possession.

In fact, two plays before Hall's touchdown, Marshall had taken a timeout to specifically clamp down on Holmes. As soon as the Herd doubled up on Holmes, Zwick went to Hall on a

slant route similar to the ones Holmes had been running.

Going Tough On Ground

Marshall's plan was clearly to make Ohio State win through the air. The Buckeyes did, but fault could hardly be found with the Thundering Herd's strategy.

OSU senior tailback Lydell Ross ran for 90 yards in the game, 55 of those coming in the second half. But the total came on 24 tough carries — an average of just 3.8 yards per touch. With one sack of Zwick added in, OSU's rushing total for the game was just 79 yards.

"You could count the number of games at most schools that you've thrown for 300 yards, and you've probably lost," Tressel said after the game. "You can count the number of games that you rushed for 200 yards and you probably won 95 percent of them. I know it's the case at Ohio State, and probably across the land."

"So do we want to throw for 300 yards and run it for 100? No. Do we want to be able to throw it well? Absolutely. Do we want people concerned about our pass game? Yes, but we've got to be able to do both."

Ross was seemingly never able to break through the Marshall line, and his longest run of the day went for 14 yards.

"Certainly the running game wasn't in sync the way we'd like for it to be," offensive coordinator Jim Bollman said. "It seemed like we'd get a decent start on some things, but there wasn't really a big-play pop out of there to really get us going."

Bollman allowed that it wasn't just Marshall crowding the line that caused the Buckeyes problems running the ball.

"Early in the game, (after) we hit them with a couple of long passes, there were times when they were not up there," he said. "And then there were times when they hit us right and they were up there and they caught us a couple of times."

Either way, Bollman said OSU is going to have to run the ball to be successful.

"Over the long run, if they are putting safeties down in the box, then we have to be able to run the ball," he said. "And at times we didn't do that well enough today."

Ross said there was nothing that the Herd defense did that confused the Buckeyes. It was a simple lack of execution.

"There wasn't anything they did that we hadn't seen on the video," the senior tailback said. "Someone asked me if I was frustrated today, but the answer to that is no. Mistakes are going to happen and we made some today. We'll correct those."

Ross said the real problem was that the Buckeyes got an early lead on Marshall and didn't extend it.

"When you let teams hang around like we did, they're going to hang around all day," he said. "We hit them with that quick score (Holmes' 80-yard touchdown play) and then didn't put them away."

"But we're going to get better. I thought we got better in the second half. And we'll get even better than that."

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OHIO STATE VS. MARSHALL

Performance Didn't Fit Mold Of Silver Bullets

The fact that Ohio State beat Marshall brought smiles to the faces of the Buckeyes.

The way they won, however, made the defense frown.

Looking very un-OSU like, the Buckeyes allowed the plucky visitors from Huntington, W.Va., to gain 150 yards on the ground — something that's almost never done in Ohio Stadium — and punched Ohio State in the mouth literally and figuratively, rolling up drives of 12 plays and 17 plays, the latter ending on an ill-advised fake field-goal attempt in the third quarter.

There was also another 11-play drive that resulted in a missed field goal.

It all wound up to an afternoon and early evening that saw Marshall run 79 offensive plays to just 59 for Ohio State.

OSU defensive coordinator and Marshall grad Mark Snyder admitted he was proud of his alma mater, but he also wore the look of a man who was just happy to get out of Dodge with his life.

"That wasn't the way we drew it up," Snyder said. "We got tough there at the end and finally made a couple of big stops, but they had us back on our heels for a good part of the second half."

The Thundering Herd averaged 3.4 yards per carry, nearly a yard better than Ohio State had allowed Cincinnati the week before, and on the 17-play drive

INSIDE THE DEFENSE with Mike Wachsman

that ended with nothing, Marshall ran the ball 15 times with all but one play gaining positive yards.

"(Marshall) rushing for 150 yards is unacceptable," Snyder said. "We pride ourselves on stopping the run, and we couldn't do it for most of the third quarter. They did a nice job changing things up, and that really had us guessing."

Marshall turned the tables on Ohio State after halftime, running out of the same formations it had passed out of in the first half.

With an overload to one side and the Buckeyes outmanned on the edge, the Herd ran to the field side and then cut back toward the boundary. It didn't help that veteran cornerback Dustin Fox was out of the lineup, the victim of a broken arm in the first quarter.

"That really caught us by surprise," defensive end Jay Richardson said of Marshall's second-half game plan. "We didn't expect them to run out of that formation, and they did a nice job cutting it



JEFF BRIDGMAN

TAKING HIS LICKS — Marshall tailback Earl Charles (right) absorbs a hit from Ohio State safety Donte Whitner during the Herd's nail-biting 24-21 loss. Charles finished with 72 yards on 16 carries and helped Marshall confuse the Buckeye defense.

back up in there. Hats off to Marshall. It was good play-calling and nice execution by them."

The Buckeyes had trouble getting it fixed because Snyder, stationed on the sideline instead of in the press box, couldn't really get a good vantage point on what was happening.

OSU got caught in a personnel mismatch, and that kept Marshall in the game for all of the last two quarters.

"We couldn't communicate very well because everything was moving so fast," said linebacker Bobby Carpenter, who had a busy day with a game-high 13 tackles. "They were running to the sideline and then cutting it back and we were outflanked. We couldn't guess right more than anything."

After the defense finally got off the field, a little bit of tinkering kept

Marshall from doing much more damage on the ground.

"We starting sliding guys and stunting guys into the formation," Carpenter said. "After they scored to tie it up (at 14), we just said as long as we don't let them score again we'll be fine. We started to get a feel for what they were doing in the fourth quarter and did a better job shutting them down."

Even though the Herd did get a fourth-quarter touchdown, it was hardly the defense's fault. Quarterback Justin Zwick pitched an interception and, with the help of a Buckeye penalty, the Herd took the ball all the way back to the OSU 13-yard line, giving them an opportunity to tie the game at 21.

In the fourth quarter, however, the Buckeyes rose to the occasion on defense. They overcame three offensive turnovers

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and allowed the Herd just 63 of its 290 total yards in the final period.

No Takeaways ... Again

After coming up empty in the turnover department against Cincinnati, the Buckeyes made a concerted effort in preparation for Marshall to strip the ball and do a better job forcing interceptions.

It was all for naught as the Herd did not lose the ball once on offense the entire game.

"It's hard to believe we're 2-0 and down seven in the turnover department," defensive end Simon Fraser said, referring to the four OSU mistakes against Marshall and three the previous week against Cincinnati. "We work on it all the time in practice but haven't been able to get any. That's not something we can have continue and still expect to get away with."

The lack of turnovers dampened the afternoon for Snyder, who seems to be at a loss to explain why the ball isn't bouncing Ohio State's way.

"You preach it every week," the OSU defensive coordinator said. "We had a couple of chances there to get interceptions and we don't get them. There was a fumble rolling around there and they got it back."

"We're playing aggressive defense, which is what you want to do. But we're not getting the ball and setting our offense up."

Showing just how much turnovers hurt, the Buckeyes gave it away four times in the game and three times in the fourth quarter alone. Two of those miscues directly resulted in Marshall touchdowns.

"We gave them a short field and we were never able to get a short field for the offense," Snyder bemoaned.

Fox, who watched the game from the sideline in the second half, was left scratching his head as well.

"I thought for sure we were going to get at least one," the senior co-captain said. "We made some nice hits but they held on to the ball. It's something we're just going to have to go back and address in practice because we can't keep living on the edge like this."

Hill Nearly Climbs Mountain

Ohio State was effusive in its praise of Herd quarterback Stan Hill.

A week after getting sacked eight times in a loss to Troy, the senior QB was a workmanlike 22 of 34, although all of those completions accounted for only 140 yards, an average of just 6.4 yards per connection.

Still, he accounted for a touchdown pass and ran the show like the seasoned veteran he is.

"I really think he was calling the plays on the field," Snyder said. "There was probably some guidance from the coaches, but he looked like he was really running the show. When you have a quarterback who can do that, it's like having another coach on the field."

Hill's 23-yard touchdown pass to Brad Bates with 8:40 left in the game tied the contest at 21 and was one of many throws Hill made with very little pressure.

"We got to him once or twice, but we gave him way too much time to operate," Snyder said. "He's a very good quarterback. That touchdown throw was the

kind of throw a professional makes. He was under control and did all the things they needed him to do."

Hill said that the touchdown pass came directly from the press box.

"They played hard Cover 2 coverage on us the entire drive, and our coaches in the press box gave us that play to beat that coverage," the Marshall QB said. "Brad did a good job in keeping the corner on the hash, and I just fired the ball in and he made a great catch."

The touchdown came on a third-and-20 play after the Buckeyes accepted a holding penalty against the Herd on the previous down. Declining that penalty would have set up a fourth-and-9 at the OSU 12.

"Our feeling was to back them up further and give our guys a chance to push them back out of field-goal range," Snyder said. "If we had declined the penalty, they would have almost surely kicked the field goal and our lead would have been down to four."

"Our thinking was, 'Hey, push 'em back and let our guys try and create a big play.' As it turned out, they were the ones that made the play."

The decision didn't exactly sit well with everyone. Carpenter was visibly upset on the field and let Snyder and the rest of the defensive coaches know it.

"I didn't agree," he said rather sheepishly, letting a smile cross his face. "It was a heat-of-the-battle type thing. Probably just frustration over the touchdown, to tell you the truth. We should have held them and then it wouldn't have made any difference."

Cornerback E.J. Underwood had a great view of Hill's tying touchdown toss

as he was just behind Bates as the Herd receiver grabbed the ball.

"I thought we'd make the play because I had (safety) Nate (Salley) over there with me," Underwood said. "We were in Cover 2 and I was supposed to keep sinking. I let the guy get behind me and he made a great catch and they scored. Fortunately, we won."

Richardson said Marshall's approach was a sound one and is what kept the Herd alive until the very end.

"They had an excellent game plan," he said. "They ran those bubble screens, which are basically running plays. They ate up the clock and the passes aren't high risk. It's up to the receivers to make something out of it, and we didn't do the best job of tackling."

"(And) Hill is an excellent quarterback. We didn't do our job as well as we could have. We kept most of the plays in front of us, but we needed to have a better pass rush."

Carpenter said the Buckeyes really weren't caught off guard by much of what it saw from Marshall's passing game, but they were disappointed there wasn't more pressure.

"They had lined up in the shotgun a lot in their first game (against Troy)," the junior linebacker said. "The difference between that game and today is that their (offensive) line got a lot better. We didn't see that they were very good from the film of the Troy game, but they did a much better job helping out on blocks and recognizing what we were doing defensively."

"If you give someone like Hill time to operate, he'll cut you up. We nearly let him do that."



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OHIO STATE VS. MARSHALL

Team 'Fortunate' Turnovers Didn't Equal A Loss

Throughout the season, BSB is publishing excerpts of head coach Jim Tressel's postgame press conferences. Here is what he had to say following the win over Marshall.

Jim Tressel: "We played a team that I thought got prepared very well. Marshall is passionate about the game of football. They had a good plan and they committed themselves to their plan. Their defense had lots of people up by the line of scrimmage. They weren't going to let us control the tempo of the game with the run.

"Offensively, they did a good job of changing up things. And their quarterback (Stan Hill), I thought, played an excellent football game.

"Obviously, the difference in the game was Mike Nugent. But we can't turn it over like that and give them points and let them have a chance."

Q. Your team committed three turnovers in the fourth quarter alone and still found a way to win. Could you comment on that?

JT: "Our defense hung in there tough and did a great job of stopping them there on that last drive. We appeared like we were going to put pressure on their punter and he kind of shanked it and we were really trying to set up a return. We wanted Santonio (Holmes) to see if he could bring it back, give us 15 yards from what we needed (for a field-goal attempt) then maybe throw for it and skip that overtime stuff. We were fortunate."

Q. Can you talk about that last drive that Justin Zwick engineered, especially his confidence factor after throwing two interceptions in the fourth quarter?

JT: "Justin did a good job finding the open guy. And like happens to you so much defensively, you don't know which way the offense is going to go. If you play it too tight, is Teddy Ginn or Bam Childress going to



JEFF BREHMA

SAME TEAM, DIFFERENT COACH — Even though OSU coach Jim Tressel (right) was very familiar with Marshall from his days at I-AA Youngstown State, he had never faced a Herd team led by Bob Pruett.

run by you? Or do you play it real loose and make sure you make the tackle?"

Q. You played Marshall a number of times when you coached at Youngstown State. Was there any resemblance in this game to those games?

JT: "All of them were tight and hard-fought between two teams that really love the game and love to get after it. We've said all week long Marshall is passionate about the game and they lost to a very good team, Troy State, which we all know now after seeing what they did to Missouri. Really, (Marshall) dominated the Troy game in a lot of ways and just didn't win. They're not used to losing — we mentioned that to all of you all week long — and they played like they're not used to losing."

Q. Did you debate at all on the sideline about taking the fourth-quarter holding penalty against Marshall that moved them back and gave them another shot at what ended up being the tying touchdown? What was your thinking there? Did you want to make them take a longer field-goal try?

JT: "We talked about it a little bit back and forth. Do you want them to be third-and-8, I think, or do you want them to be second-and-19? (Actually, Marshall would have faced fourth-and-9 had the Buckeyes declined the penalty. Ed.) I guess it's irrelevant because they threw a touchdown on the next play but, yes, we kind of went back and forth. If we could have had two incompletions in a row or made a sack, we might have knocked them out of field goal range. As it turned out, it wasn't the best decision. Sometimes when you sack them a couple of times, you look smart when they miss their field goal, but you have to make decisions and you

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OHIO STATE VS. MARSHALL

have to do it in 20 seconds."

Q. Holmes sat out most of the third quarter because of dehydration. How much did that affect the offensive performance in that quarter?

JT: "Santonio is quite a player, as we've been saying all along. It really didn't change what we did, though. We didn't score any, obviously, but I thought we stayed with a similar plan, and they stayed with their plan of having everyone up in the box or on their way to the box at the snap of the ball. I suppose he wasn't there to make a couple of big plays for us, but he's a special player."

Q. Did you see Justin go through growing pains today? He had a brilliant start and then made some mistakes on those two interceptions. What is your impression of how he fought back there with that last drive?

JT: "I don't know if he went through more pains than the rest of us, but that's the life of a quarterback. The ball's in your hands and you have to make decisions. Hopefully you learn when the decisions you make aren't quite what they should have been and maybe you don't keep the situation in mind quite as much as you should. But he handled it all."

"There were some times where it just didn't work out for him, but he wasn't going to stop competing. He competed and took us down and gave us a chance to win the game in regulation. So you have to feel good about that, and you also have to be working on the things that we're not doing well enough yet. He'll do that."

Q. There was quite a disparity in your yardage game passing with 318 yards as opposed to the run with just 79. Is it going to be "Air Tressel" now?

JT: "It better not be. You could count the number of games at most schools when you've thrown for 300 yards, and you've probably lost. Do we want to throw for 300 and run for 100? No. Do we want to be able to throw it well? Absolutely. Do we want people concerned about our pass game? Yes, but we've got to be able to do both."

Q. You talk a lot about turnover margin and the importance of it. Your team is now seven down in turnover margin but you're 2-0. Can I get your reaction to that?

JT: "We're lucky, I guess, because typically if you're at a minus-7 in turnover margin, you're going to be 0-2. But that tells you that something else must have been going right substantially like the defense playing well or special teams. We talk a lot about explosive gains. I don't know how many plays of 12 to 15 or more yards we had, but I think there were a number of them and sometimes those explosive gain margins can help offset the turnover margin if it's not so good."

"But we can't count on that. I've not been around too many teams that can lose the turnover margin and be a champion."

Q. Could you talk a little bit more about the running game and not being able to gain a lot of yards today?

JT: "I think part of it is that Marshall's a good football team. Part of it is we've got to get better. Part of it is a numbers game where there's more folks there than we can block and that's why (we have) 300-and-some yards passing because everyone was at the line of scrimmage. They committed themselves to that plan. They thought that was the way that they could win the game and you know what? I'd say it was probably a pretty good plan. They almost won the game."

Q. It looked for a time like they were really controlling the line of scrimmage when they were going up the field. What was happening to you there defensively? Why were they able to really move the ball on you?

JT: "I think that one drive especially, they got us going a little bit sideways and were making some nice cuts. I'll bet you we'll find that maybe we were playing high a little bit because usually if you play up a little bit you'll get pushed sideways. They're a good outfit and they had us on our heels a little bit. The quarterback was very efficient when he threw. He completed them and so he mixed it up. I thought, again, that they had a good plan. They stayed with it and they were tough to beat."

"Plus, we gave them 14 of their 21 points. One we handed to them (on Lydell Ross' fumble) and they ran in with it, and the other we gave to them on — I don't know what yard line, the 13 or something — so they had to travel 13 yards for 14 points and they only got 21 total. We just can't turn the football over."

Q. Could you assess your injuries and what you guys may have lost today?

JT: "The only one I know for sure is Dustin Fox. He's got a fractured forearm and he'll probably not be back any before the middle of the Big Ten schedule. Outside of that, I'm not sure. I know Mike Kudla left the game (with a neck injury). Santonio left with cramps. I don't know who else. That might be it. But I know Dustin will be out for a while. It's a shame."

Q. How much of your team's success do you think is the mind-set of expecting to win and then finding a way to win in the second half?

JT: "We had a lot of confidence that if they could move it close, Mike Nugent would kick it and put it through. Our defense had a lot of confidence that if they could stop Marshall, maybe Santonio could run it close enough, and if not, our offense could move it close

enough. So I think that mind-set is they have a lot of confidence in each other and a lot of belief in that they know their comrades won't stop trying."

"There's nothing guaranteed that we'll always win, but they know that their guys will go down trying and they have a lot of faith."

Q. A lot of players who touched the ball extensively last week did not touch the ball as much today, namely Bam Childress and Maurice Hall. Did you have very many plays for Bam in the second half especially?

JT: "I think Bam had a big catch coming out, a 20-some yard catch in that fourth quarter. But we don't always design plays just for a guy. The positions they play, the route that Bam caught two or three balls on last week, today we happened to hit the square-in one time and we happened to hit the back one time because they covered Bam. If a guy catches three or four balls, it doesn't mean we told the quarterback in the huddle, 'Throw it to Bam.' It just so happened the routes he was running were covered and they were finding other people."

"As far as Mo Hall, I don't know how

many rushes we had, but I think Lydell might have been the only one that carried from tailback. I'm not sure."

Q. What about Antonio (Pittman)?

JT: "Antonio pulled a quad (muscle) a little bit last weekend. We thought he might get back and he was kind of perky Wednesday and Thursday, but we didn't think it was in his best interest to play today."

Q. The last pass to Ryan Hamby that set up the field goal — did you have any fear that you wouldn't get lined up in time to get the field goal off?

JT: "We had just hit Santonio on a little hitch route. He stayed up and got out of bounds. We kind of ran the same type of thing, the play that could happen the quickest and we talked to Justin at that point in time and said, 'Hey, if we happen to be in the field of play, everyone just get up and we'll spike the ball and we should be OK.' They were holding us down. They're well-schooled and they were getting up slow and keeping us from getting across the line of scrimmage. But was I concerned? Yes. I watched that clock just like you did. I wanted to see the ball spiked."

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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 24, Marshall 21

Sept. 11, 2004 — Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
MARSHALL	7	7	0	7	21
OHIO STATE	14	7	0	3	24

First Quarter

OSU — Holmes, 80 yard pass from Zwick (Nugent kick), 9:52; 1 play, 80 yards, 0:09 TOP.

MU — Charles, 2 yard run (O'Connor kick), 5:31; 12 plays, 80 yards, 4:21 TOP.

OSU — Holmes, 47 yard pass from Zwick (Nugent kick), 0:18; 7 plays, 85 yards, 2:04 TOP.

Second Quarter

MU — Goddard, 27 yard fumble return (O'Connor kick), 5:36.

OSU — R.Hall, 20 yard pass from Zwick (Nugent kick), 3:13; 8 plays, 80 yards, 2:23 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

MU — Bates, 23 yard pass from S.Hill (O'Connor kick), 8:40; 3 plays, 13 yards, 1:14 TOP.

OSU — Nugent, 55 yard field goal, 0:00; 5 plays, 18 yards, 0:25 TOP.

Att. — 104,622

Weather — 77 degrees, clear and sunny; wind, 6 mph from the east.



Team Statistics

	MU	OSU
First Downs	19	15
Rushing	10	3
Passing	7	12
Penalty	2	0
Rushes-Yards	44-150	26-79
Passing Yards	140	318
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	35-22-0	33-18-2
Offensive Plays	79	59
Total Net Yards	290	397
Third Down Efficiency	6-17	2-10
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	0-0
Punts	9-42.6	7-42.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-2
Penalties	7-43	6-38
Time of Possession	35:43	24:17

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — MU: Bradshaw 17-77; Charles 16-72; Morris 1-15; Gochneaur 1-5; Fitzgerald 1-3; O'Connor 1-(-2); Team 2-(-3); S.Hill 5-(-17). **OSU**: L.Ross 24-90; T.Smith 1-0; Zwick 1-(-1).

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — MU: S.Hill 34-22-0-140-1; Morris 1-0-0-0-0. **OSU**: Zwick 30-18-2-318-3; T.Smith 2-0-0-0-0; Team 1-0-0-0-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — MU: Spann 7-39; J.Davis 5-34; Bates 3-29; Charles 3-19; Fitzgerald 3-16; Deifel 1-3. **OSU**: Holmes 10-218; R.Hall 3-38; Ross 2-27; Childress 1-20; Ginn 1-10; Hamby 1-5.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — MU: O'Connor 9-42.6-58. **OSU**: Turano 6-43.7-54; Zwick 1-32.0-32. **PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — MU: Spann 2-48. **OSU**: Holmes 3-21.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — MU: Bradshaw 1-11. **OSU**: Holmes 1-18.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES — MU: Goddard 1-27; D.Wilson 1-3. **OSU**: None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — MU: Royal 2-16. **OSU**: None.

SACKS — MU: Whyce 1-11. **OSU**: Richardson 1-12; Green 1-6; D'Andrea 1-1.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — MU: Whyce 1-11; J.Martin 1-4; Keyes 1-2; D.Wilson 1-1. **OSU**: Green 2-7; D'Andrea 1-5-2; Richardson 1-12; Whitner 1-3; Carpenter 1-2; Patterson 1-2; Hawk 0-5-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asslt.-Tot.) — MU: Atkins 4-4-8; Keyes 5-2-7; D.Wilson 2-5-7; J.Martin 4-2-6; Whyce 2-4-6; W.Smith 4-0-4; Chisholm 2-1-3; Anderson 1-2-3; Terrell 2-0-2; Goddard 2-0-2; R.Williams 1-1-2; D.Thomas 1-0-1; Hairston 0-1-1; Couch 0-1-1; Thornton 0-1-1. **OSU**: Carpenter 6-7-13; Hawk 6-6-12; Whitner 6-3-9; Green 5-1-6; Salley 4-2-6; E.J.Underwood 2-4-6; Youboty 3-2-5; D'Andrea 2-3-5; Schlegel 2-1-3; Richardson 1-2-3; Kudla 2-0-2; Everett 1-1-2; Fox 1-1-2; Pitcock 1-1-2; Welch 1-0-1; D.Patterson 1-0-1; Turano 1-0-1; White Jr. 1-0-1; Holmes 1-0-1; Hamby 1-0-1; Penton 0-1-1; Fraser 0-1-1; Maupin 0-1-1; Barton 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME — **MARSHALL**: Defense, Goddard, R.Hayes, Whyce, J.Martin, Rembert, Atkins, W.Smith, Terrell, Keyes, Anderson, Royal, O'Connor, Offense, J.Davis, Spann, Bates, Mullins, Griffin, Cook, Salto, Bullock, Elcass, S.Hill, Charles, Reserves, Fitzgerald, Moore, Gochneaur, Wilks, Shope, Morris, Morrison, Rodamer, Tyson, Hargrove, R.Williams, Thornton, Chisholm, D.Wilson, Hairston, McCowan, D.Thomas, Newsome, Bradshaw, Couch, Albin, McNeely, Baynes, Blakey, Deifel, Merritt, Parkhurst. **OHIO STATE**: Offense, Sims, Datis, Mangold, Kne, Schafer, Hamby, Holmes, Childress, Zwick, Ross, Schnittker, Nugent, Defense, Fraser, Richardson, Green, Pitcock, Hawk, D'Andrea, Carpenter, E.J.Underwood, Fox, Salley, Everett, Turano, Reserves, Matthews, Ginn, R.Hall, Whitner, T.Smith, Jacobs, A.Smith, Freeman, Lyons, Youboty, M.Hall, Welch, Mitchell, Stauds, Harley, C.Lukens, Terry, Gholston, Schlegel, Kudla, Conroy, Andrews, McLaughlin, Coleman, Maupin, Downing, Barton, Hollins, Nicol, White Jr., Maupin, D.Patterson, Penton.

Season Statistics

Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Sept. 4 (9)	CINCINNATI	W, 27-6	104,604
Sept. 11 (9)	MARSHALL	W, 24-21	104,622
Sept. 18	at N.C. State	3:30 p.m.	
Oct. 2	at Northwestern	7:45 or 9 p.m.	
Oct. 9	WISCONSIN	TBA	
Oct. 16	at Iowa	TBA	
Oct. 23	INDIANA	TBA	
Oct. 30	PENN STATE	TBA	
Nov. 6	at Michigan State	TBA	
Nov. 13	at Purdue	TBA	
Nov. 20	MICHIGAN	1 p.m.	

* OSU's gameday AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	36	30
Rushing	11	13
Passing	23	15
Penalty	2	2
Average Per Game/Rush	149.5	113.0
Average Per Game/Pass	280.0	151.0
Total Offense	859	528
Total Plays	131	142
Average Per Game	429.5	264.0
Average Per Play	6.6	3.7
Penalties-Yards	8-58	14-91
Fumbles-Lost	6-3	1-0
3rd Down Efficiency	8/23	11/35
Percentage	35%	31%
4th Down Efficiency	0/1	1/4
Percentage	0%	25%
Sacks-Yards	3-19	2-18
Time of Possession Avg.	28:49	31:11

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	14	17	7	13	51	25.5
Opponents	7	10	3	7	27	13.5

Attendance	Games	Total	Avg.
Home	2	209,226	104,613
Away	0	0	0
Total	2	209,226	104,613

Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Lydell Ross	41	231	5.6	1	68
Tony Pittman	7	66	9.4	0	38
Maurice Hall	7	14	2.0	0	5
Troy Smith	6	7	1.2	0	9
Roshawn Parker	1	3	3.0	0	3
Team	2	-3	-1.5	0	0
Justin Zwick	5	-19	-3.8	0	6
OSU Totals	69	299	4.3	1	68
OPP Totals	70	226	3.2	1	19

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Santonio Holmes	14	309	22.1	3	80
Bam Childress	5	87	17.4	0	28
Ryan Hamby	5	80	16.0	1	29
Roy Hall	4	50	12.5	1	20
Lydell Ross	3	25	8.3	0	23
Ted Ginn Jr.	3	9	3.0	0	10
OSU Totals	34	560	16.5	5	80
OPP Totals	39	302	7.7	1	28

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPP	FG	SAF	PtYs
Santonio Holmes	3	—	—	—	—	—	18
Mike Nugent	—	6-6	—	—	—	—	15
Roy Hall	1	—	—	—	—	—	6
Ryan Hamby	1	—	—	—	—	—	6
Lydell Ross	1	—	—	—	—	—	6
OSU Totals	6	6-6	—	—	—	—	51
OPP Totals	3	3-3	—	—	—	—	27

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD	INT	Rating
Justin Zwick	32	56	57.1	531	4-4	146.08	
Troy Smith	2	5	40.0	29	1-0	154.72	
Team	0	1	0.0	0	0-0	0.00	
OSU Totals	34	62	54.8	560	5-4	144.42	
OPP Totals	39	72	54.2	302	1-0	93.98	

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Mike Nugent	2-2	0-0	0-0	1-2	3-4
OSU Totals	2-2	0-0	0-0	1-2	3-4
OPP Totals	2-2	0-1	0-0	0-0	2-3

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Kyle Turano	7	319	45.6	0	57
Justin Zwick	1	32	32.0	0	32
OSU Totals	8	351	43.9	0	57
OPP Totals	17	755	44.4	0	59

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
None	0	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	0	0	0.0	0	0
OPP Totals	4	21	5.2	0	16

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Santonio Holmes	3	21	7.0	0	10
OSU Totals	3	21	7.0	0	10
OPP Totals	2	48	24.0	0	32

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Maurice Hall	2	84	42.0	0	43
Santonio Holmes	1	18	18.0	0	18
OSU Totals	3	102	34.0	0	43
OPP Totals	4	67	16.8	0	23

Defensive Leaders	Solo	Ass.	Tot.	TFL	Yds.	Sacks
Bobby Carpenter	11	11	22	1.0	2	—
A.J. Hawk	7	14	21	1.0	1	—
Nate Salley	7	6	13	—	—	—
Donte Whitner	8	3	11	1.0	3	—
E.J. Underwood	5	6	11	—	—	—
Marcus Green	7	2	9	2.0	7	1.0
Quinn Pittcock	1	8	9	—	—	—
Mike D'Andrea	3	6	9	2.5	3	1.0
Ashton Youboty	5	2	7	1.0	1	—
Anthony Schlegel	2	3	5	—	—	—
Tyler Everett	3	1	4	—	—	—
David Patterson	2	2	4	2.0	3	—
Mike Kudla	2	1	3	—	—	—
Dustin Fox	2	1	3	—	—	—
Jay Richardson	1	2	3	1.0	12	1.0
Simon Fraser	0	3	3	0.5	1	—
OSU Totals	75	76	151	13	35	3-19
OPP Totals	68	56	124	11	39	2-18

Fumbles Forced	1	—	—
1 — Marcus Green.			

Fumbles Recovered	None.
None.	

Blocked Kicks	None.
None.	

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OSU head coach Jim Tressel's assessment of the game: "Marshall had a good game plan and they executed it well. They didn't let us control the line of scrimmage. And we can't continue to turn it over like we did and have a chance."

Marshall head coach Bob Pruett's assessment of the game: "It was certainly a game we would have loved to win, especially in the second half. The difference in the ballgame was the two long passes early in the game when we had two blown coverages. We had a chance."

OSU quarterback Justin Zwick on a performance that included career highs in yardage and touchdowns but two costly interceptions: "There are a lot of things that go into it, but I can't do that. I can't let one mistake turn into another one. Coach Tressel preaches about that all the time, so that's on my shoulders. I'm going to look at it and try not to let it happen again."

Marshall safety Chris Royal on making both interceptions against Zwick: "On the first pick, I sat back in zone coverage and the ball was virtually thrown right to me. On the second pick, I told everyone on defense we were in zone and to watch the deep ball. (Zwick) tried to look me off at first, but then he turned toward me and made the throw. The ball came right to me."

OSU flanker Santonio Holmes on how he was able to get open so many times, especially in the first half: "We kind of knew what they wanted to do — they wanted to keep some safeties down in the box for run support. And with that, we just wanted to get behind them and we were able to do that a couple of times. And we did a great job of making some great catches and putting it in the end zone."

Marshall offensive tackle Nate Griffin on his team's second-half performance: "We were too excited in the first half and didn't execute. When we entered the second half, we were more focused and ready to play. We started to run the ball well and just gained confidence little by little. It's just unfortunate we didn't win."

OSU tailback Lydell Ross on his fumble that resulted in a touchdown for Marshall: "As I was going down, my hand was exposed and any good defender will make that play. That was my mistake. I left my hand exposed and that was my mistake. It won't happen again."

Holmes on some bulletin board material from Marshall: "It kind of lingered in my mind that they said in (a newspaper) article that if we put any two receivers out there, they'd lock 'em down. That kind of got to me a little bit and it kind of made me fired up a little bit."

Pruett on a botched fake field goal in the third quar-

ter that came back to haunt his team: "We saw that it could work on the extra point. What you do is go to the line, and if it's there, you call it. If it's not, you don't. Our guys saw it, and we thought it was an opportune time. We had them deep in their territory if we didn't make it."

Griffin on the role the Ohio Stadium crowd played in that play: "The crowd was loud down there (in the closed end) and we didn't communicate. There's nothing you can do."

Zwick on the next-to-last play when he spiked the ball even though tight end Ryan Hamby was not yet set: "I wasn't even worried about that. I just wanted to get the ball moved downfield a couple more yards for Nuge. We knew we were going to have to spike it. We had everybody ready to get up there and get set so we could spike the ball. They kind of laid on (Hamby) a little bit so it took them a little bit longer. I watched the clock tick down and by the time they put the ball down, I just got it up as quick as possible."

OSU kicker Mike Nugent on his feelings when he enters the game and the crowds yells "Noooooooooooo!": "To tell you the truth, I almost listen

for that. But it doesn't get me excited. It's more of a soothing feeling because of the way they do it — that low sound that just kind of floats in. It helps relax me more than anything."

OSU cornerback Dustin Fox on the same subject: "There was never a doubt in my mind. I talked to him just before he went out and high-fived him, and I knew he was going to make it. The second he kicked it I started walking to the locker room, saying 'It's good.' That's just the kind of faith you have in Mike."

Royal on the same subject: "I was certain we were going to overtime. I was confident our defense would hold out because we had seen every play they had. They were out of things to do on offense. However, they did a good job of connecting on a few timely passes to set up a tough kicker who doesn't miss."

OSU center Nick Mangold on his feelings about watching the game winner: "I didn't watch the kick. I can't. I've never been able to watch a field goal. I can watch once the ball's in the air, but I can't watch the kick itself. It has nothing to do with Nuge or the fact that I didn't think he would make it because I just knew he would. I've just never been able to watch a field goal and I wasn't going to start with this one."

Nugent on his feelings about winning the game on the final play: "I just did my job. Everybody's telling me I won the game, but I just did my part. If everybody else on this team doesn't do what they have to do, it never even gets to me."

Pruett on his team's chances in overtime: "Good. (Ohio State was) a tired football team."

Marshall quarterback Stan Hill on the loss: "This is a tough one to swallow. It's disappointing to be in a position to win and not close the game out. We've had this happen too many times before."

OSU defensive coordinator Mark Snyder, a Marshall grad, with the last word: "You never like to give money away, but it's good to know that my alumni checks are being put to good use. They played well today."



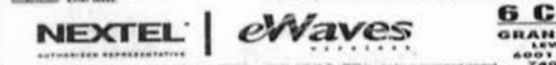
JEFF BRIDGMAN

HAPPY ALUM — Mark Snyder, who graduated from Marshall before he came to Ohio State as an assistant coach, was pleased to get a win over the team from Huntington, W.Va.

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THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Nugent As Certain As Death, Taxes And Wins

Nooooooooooooo!!

What more can you say after Ohio State's dramatic win over Marshall?

It's really striking to me the confidence that the Buckeye players, coaches and fans have in their kicker and co-captain. Everyone in the house knew that the game-winning kick attempt was a statistical long shot. Yet I think everyone in the house knew that the Buckeyes had a chance with Mike Nugent at the ready.

And the senior nailed the game winner with plenty of yardage to spare, sending the Buckeyes and their faithful into a frenzy. It was a frenzy fueled not only by victory, but by the fact that Nugent is one of the more popular Buckeyes in recent years.

He demonstrated one of the reasons for his popularity with his modest remarks after the game when he tried to tell anyone who would listen that it wasn't he who had won the game, but the team. And in this case, the remarks about the team were more than a simple cliché.

The winning scenario was set up first when the defense forced Marshall into a three-and-out. The Herd, in fact, lost 2 yards on the drive. Then the Buckeye punt return team harried Ian O'Connor into a 26-yard punt that gave OSU a realistic shot from its own 45.

Now it was the offense's turn with 25 seconds and no timeouts. Quarterback Justin Zwick, who had his problems in the game with a pair of interceptions, hit Antonio Holmes twice, the receiver managing to get out of bounds both times to stop the clock. Zwick's third pass, over the middle to tight end Ryan Hamby, was riskier as the clock kept moving after the completion.

Despite Marshall's best efforts — and the Herd was clearly well-coached on this — Zwick was able to get the Buckeyes — also clearly well-coached — to the line and spike the ball with two seconds remaining. After a penalty moved the ball back to the 37, it was the kick team's turn.

Kyle Andrews' snap was perfect, Kyle Turano's spot was true and Nugent sent the crowd home happy.

He was right. There were a lot more people than just him involved in the victory.

Of course, there were plenty of Buckeyes responsible for helping put Ohio State in the predicament where they needed Nugent's heroics.

The team was hampered by four turnovers, and the normally stout Buckeye defense proved troublingly susceptible to the run, especially in the second half.

At one point in the third quarter, the Thundering Herd went on a 17-play, 83-yard march almost exclusively on the ground. Though the drive did not result in any points for Marshall, it kept the ball away from the Buckeye offense for nine minutes and 19 seconds.

While Marshall was able to hurt the Buckeyes on the ground, Ohio State gained just 79 rushing yards on 26 carries. The Buckeyes had been able to wear down Cincinnati the week before and their offensive line took charge in the second half. They never quite did the same against the Marshall defense.

For the second week in a row, the Buckeyes showed more of a willingness to pass the ball than they have in the past under head coach Jim Tressel. Unlike the

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH
Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

previous week against the Bearcats, however, the offense lacked balance with its struggles on the ground.

To me, the OSU offense still seems to be searching for an identity. I look at the way Marshall did different things to exploit the Buckeye defense and I wonder if Ohio State has a cohesive plan to do the same. I wonder if the Buckeyes adjust during the game on offense as well as they do on defense.

Some things are fairly certain. The Buckeye defense seems to get tough when it has to. And the OSU offense under Tressel produces when it has to.

And then there's Mike Nugent.

Getting Their Kicks

While much was made over Nugent's game winner, don't forget that he also aided the Buckeye cause with his kickoffs. The Herd was able to return only one of Nugent's four kicks, and that one was placed such that Marshall could get it out only to the 12-yard line.

The previous week against Cincinnati, the Bearcats returned two of Nugent's five kickoffs. Their average starting point after those returns was their own 18. That means that after two games and nine kickoffs, the opposing teams' average starting point after a Nugent boot is well inside the 20.

Not only is the senior from Centerville, Ohio, scoring his points, but he is also taking pressure off the Buckeye defense by denying opponents good field position.

The jury seems still out on the Buckeyes' other kicker, punter Turano. As everyone knows, the punter is a key component of Tressel's game plan and the Buckeyes have been spoiled by the performances of Andy Groom and B.J. Sander the last few seasons.

Turano had only one punt against UC, but it was a 57-yarder, so on the stat sheet at least, he had a good day. But that punt came from the OSU 43 and the Buckeyes would have been better served if Turano had buried it deep in Bearcat territory rather than booming it into the end zone where it came out to the 20 for a net gain of just 37. That being his first kick in front of more than 100,000 fans in Ohio Stadium, however, I'm going to give Turano that one.

Against Marshall, it was more of a mixed bag for the senior. He averaged a solid 43.7 yards on six kicks, but those stats don't tell the whole story.

His first two kicks had the length — 46 and 53 yards — but were returned 16 and 32 yards, respectively, for a net average of only 25.5 yards. His next two kicks were just 35 and 28 yards, though neither was returned, giving the Thundering Herd the ball at their 28 and 42.

Turano's last two kicks were his most productive. He nailed a 54-yarder to bury Marshall at its 6-yard line for his only punt inside the 20 and closed out with a 46-yarder that was downed at the Herd 31.

Game Notes

- I'm not advocating that Troy Smith be the OSU quarterback, but I don't quite understand how the coaches have handled him so far. If Zwick is the starting quarterback, then he's the starting quarterback. Putting Smith in for one series in the second quarter and then yanking him after he is three-and-out is hardly good for his confidence. Would he have stayed in during the first half of the last two games if he had moved the ball?

- Since taking over from the injured Drew Carter in game eight last year,

Holmes has caught 43 passes for 806 yards and 10 touchdowns in eight games. Projected out over a 12-game season that would equal 1,209 yards on 65 catches for an 18.7-yard average and 15 touchdowns.

That's pretty impressive, and even more so when you consider Michael Jenkins was the featured receiver last season. It's also pretty good for a guy who initially had a reputation for coughing up the ball, though he did lose one against the Thundering Herd.

- I've been impressed with the play of linebacker Bobby Carpenter so far this season. He led the Buckeyes in tackles for the second game in a row, totaling 13 stops against Marshall including one for loss. That gave him 22 for the season, one ahead of linebacker mate A.J. Hawk. Meanwhile, Mike D'Andrea and Anthony Schlegel have combined for 14 more stops from the middle.

I thought the tackling was pretty sloppy against Marshall. Giving opposing ball carriers extra yards will come back to haunt the Buckeyes if it continues.

- Count me as one of the Monday morning quarterbacks who would have declined the holding penalty and forced Marshall to attempt a field goal in the fourth quarter rather than allowing them to score the game-tying touchdown.

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From The Pages Of BSB**TWENTY YEARS AGO — 1984**

Following Ohio State's season-opening victory over Oregon State, the Buckeyes were suddenly and surprisingly down two players. Linebackers Larry Kolic and Mark Pfister left the team for eight days but returned the day after the season's second game.

No official reasoning was given for the pair's defection, but speculation was they were bothered by the amount of attention heaped on freshman linebacker Chris Spielman, who had 10 tackles and a forced fumble in his first collegiate game.

It didn't seem to bother the Buckeyes in their second game out of the gate. OSU harassed Washington State quarterback Mark Ryplen into three interceptions and pasted the Cougars 44-0.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO — 1989

Unpleasant memories of a 40-7 defeat at Washington in 1986 and a 42-10 loss at Pittsburgh in the second game of the previous season were dredged up after Ohio State — coming off an impressive 37-13 win over Oklahoma State in week one — went to No. 12 USC and got pasted to the tune of 42-3.

Linebacker Junior Seau's two tackles for loss led a ferocious Trojan pass rush that limited Greg Frey to 135 yards through the air, and Buckeye linebacker Derek Isaman couldn't help but think back to the 1988 game against Pitt, which Isaman watched from afar while pursuing a berth on the U.S. Olympic boxing team.

"I was in camp with (heavyweight contender) Evander Holyfield watching it on TV and it was terrible," Isaman said after the loss to USC. "It's terrible now to go through it. But I think we'll bounce back."

TEN YEARS AGO — 1994

Senior wide receiver Joey Galloway's name continued to be spread across the headlines, but this time it was for something much different from his on-field exploits or potential Heisman Trophy candidacy. The NCAA suspended Galloway for two games for accepting \$200 from a financial

planner while contemplating his college future in January.

"When I took the money, I considered myself as 100 percent leaving college football," Galloway said. "I took the money at that time. Later on, I went home, changed my mind about the decision to leave, and I just did not repay the money. That is definitely my mistake."

Without their leading threat on the field, the Buckeyes fell behind 19-0 in the first quarter and couldn't climb all the way back in falling 25-16 at Washington.

FIVE YEARS AGO — 1999

A first-week loss to Miami (Fla.) in which neither Austin Moherman nor Steve Bellisari performed particularly well made OSU's performance — and that of Bellisari in particular — in a 42-20 victory over UCLA all the more surprising.

Bellisari relieved Moherman in the second quarter and went on to complete 11 of 16 passes for 159 yards and two touchdowns in front of a crowd of 93,283 for the rare Ohio Stadium night game. Afterward, it was apparent he had won over his coach.

"There's no question he was the best quarterback on the field tonight," John Cooper said of Bellisari, "and I would think that he's probably going to be our starting quarterback after we get a chance to look at the film."

ONE YEAR AGO — 2003

It was something of a down week as far as the Ohio State football program was concerned. Head coach Jim Tressel revealed that running back Maurice Clarett would no longer be practicing with the team, while Andy Geiger sounded even more dire considering Clarett's long-term prognosis.

"I am not optimistic about the number of games that Maurice Clarett might be available to play this year," Geiger said.

The Buckeyes responded by nailing out a 16-13 victory over San Diego State thanks to a 100-yard interception return from safety Will Allen. At least the men's basketball program was in high spirits after hosting the nation's No. 6 overall senior, Malik Hairston, for the victory over the Aztecs.