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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

May 2011

OSU Caps Unusual Spring



JOSH WINSLOW

LAST MEETING – Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel spoke to his huddled team after the Scarlet-clad offense beat the Gray defense by a 59-27 score in the 2011 spring game, which also served as the semiannual jersey scrimmage.

By **ADAM JARDY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Joe Bauserman's chance to shine had finally arrived.

With incumbent starting quarterback Terrelle Pryor sidelined due to offseason foot surgery and facing a five-game suspension to open the 2011 season, Bauserman entered spring practice as the most experienced available option under center. With rain threatening in Ohio Stadium, the fifth-year senior trotted out to get the April 23 spring game under way in front of a crowd contained almost exclusively in the lower bowl of the Horseshoe.

Flanked by the first-team offensive unit and preparing to face his defensive counterparts, an immediate wrench was thrown into Bauserman's plans. The national anthem had yet to be played, and suddenly game preparations were stopped as everyone faced the northern end of the stadium to watch as the flag was raised high in the air above the field.

"I was starting to get anxious," Bauserman said following the 59-27 victory posted by the offense in a scrimmage that used a unique scoring system.

The interruption was not confined to the anthem. Once the song was completed, the family of OSU legend Jesse Owens was honored as part of a week-

end celebrating the 75th anniversary of his historic triumph in the 1936 Olympics held in Berlin.

Only then was Bauserman entrusted with the first snap of the game from senior center Michael Brewster.

"I wanted to get going," the senior quarterback said. "We had a good play called and I thought we were going to be able to go deep on the first play."

Unfortunately, that didn't go as planned, either. After being pressured out of the pocket, Bauserman tried to dump the ball off to tight end Jake Stoneburner only to have the pass fall incomplete.

That was the first of less than 90 plays that ended with the threat of rain and severe weather looming on the Ohio State campus. It was, however, a fitting opening to the final act of a spring that has been anything but business as usual in Columbus.

With Pryor, DeVier Posey, Dan "Boom" Herron, Mike Adams, Solomon Thomas and head coach Jim Tressel all facing five-game suspensions when the season begins Sept. 3 against Akron, the Buckeyes' 15 spring practice sessions took on greater importance than any in recent memory. That things did not immediately go according to plan as the scrimmage got under way did not necessarily catch Bauserman off-guard.

"You expect that it's going to be four guys fighting for one job (at quarterback) and everyone is going to be out there doing their best," he said.

"Some things throw you for a loop, but most of the time we were ready for it."

Scheduling mishaps aside, the afternoon seemed to be a continuation of where the 2010 season ended. Posey was split out wide with Herron in the backfield and Adams lined up at left tackle. Newly appointed assistant head coach Luke Fickell – who will take over gameday head coaching duties for the first five games in the fall – concerned himself only with the defense (he is also linebackers coach and co-defensive coordinator) while Tressel roamed the sidelines and oversaw all the action.

As he arrived at the stadium, however, Herron said he experienced a moment of recognition that much will be different the next time the team suits up in Ohio Stadium.

"I was like, 'It's going to be a little while until I come back out here and play with my team,'" the senior tailback said, "but today I just tried to go out there and give my best. At the same time, I know I still get to lead those guys and help them out as much as I can for the first five games."

Almost just as quickly, however, Herron dismissed those thoughts.

"You've got to stay in the moment and take it one day at a time," he said. "We can't really worry about the future right now. We've got to worry about the next day and just get better from there."

OPINION

Spring Answer Man Makes Triumphant Return

To say the 2011 incarnation of spring football at Ohio State was one of the strangest in recent memory would qualify as the understatement of this or any other millennium.

With five players including quarterback Terrelle Pryor suspended for the first five games of the season, and head coach Jim Tressel suspended for a like number of games and the subject of an ongoing NCAA investigation, discussion regarding position battles gave way to speculation regarding what (if any) additional penalties Tressel and his program will incur.

Two days after the offense scored a 59-27 win in the April 23 spring game/jersey scrimmage, Ohio State announced it had received a formal notice of allegations from the NCAA, allegations the university was instructed to review and then respond to in written form.

The school, which indicated "the allegations are largely consistent with what the university self-reported ... on March 8, 2011, and which were widely covered in the media," has until July 5 to make its formal response after which the NCAA Committee on Infractions will discuss the case Aug. 12.

It all makes for particularly unique times as the Spring Answer Man returns for his 17th annual visit to BSB.

Q. The latest news from the NCAA certainly makes it sound bad for Tressel. Will he be fired or forced to resign?

A. I believe the operative term in Ohio State's news release announcing the formal notice of allegations was "the allegations are largely consistent with what the university self-reported."

Most of the regenerated buzz surrounded April 25 stories accompanied by such blazing headlines as "NCAA alleges Jim Tressel not honest" and "NCAA penalties could be severe." Considering the fact the university self-reported Tressel's transgressions on March 8, and that the coach himself has admitted his wrongdoing, those headlines – from ESPN and The Columbus Dispatch, respectively – seemed disingenuous at best.

As we outlined a couple of weeks ago in this very space, many of those calling for Tressel's ouster are hanging their hats on the coach's violation of NCAA bylaw 10.1 – providing false or misleading information to NCAA investigators. Since 1989, 78 of the 81 coaches or athletic administrators accused of 10.1 violations either resigned or were terminated.

Unlike Tressel, however, most of the coaches or administrators in those cases were accused of additional violations. As far as we know, the NCAA has uncovered no recruiting violations, no additional obfuscation and no further missteps by the coach. It would seem that if Tressel has not been asked to resign by now, it's not going to happen.

Q. What are the real ramifications for the Ohio State football program when the NCAA hands down its final ruling?

A. The NCAA could choose to accept Ohio State's self-imposed sanctions on Tressel – a five-game suspension and \$250,000 fine – or it could levy additional penalties.

Since Tressel has admitted to knowingly using players who would have been deemed ineligible, the NCAA could vacate the Buckeyes' 2010 regular season. In my humble opinion, vacating seasons is one of the most feeble of all penalties meted out by the NCAA. Personal statistics from those games are not expunged and final scores remain on the books, but we are supposed to pretend those contests never happened? Ridiculous.

The NCAA could also recommend harsher penalties for Tressel that would compel the

university to add to the coach's suspension or issue sanctions that would leave the school no choice but to fire him. But since the notice of allegations implied that the university is not under the dreaded penalty of "lack of institutional control," the doomsday theory regarding Tressel's job security seems unlikely.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK
Mark Rea

Q. OK, let's get to some spring football questions. Is Braxton Miller going to be the starting quarterback in the season opener against Akron?

A. Based upon his spring-game performance, Miller certainly has to be the leading candidate to replace Pryor. But we all need to be a little cautious here. Access to spring practice was extremely limited, and by all accounts Miller's best performance – by far – this spring came during the final scrimmage.

Prior to that, the freshman had been feeling his way along to the point where some of his teammates offered the suggestion that Miller was being a little too laid-back. The only two freshmen who have been starting quarterbacks at Ohio State – Art Schlichter and Pryor – suffered some early leadership issues, and that could be the largest hurdle Miller must overcome.

There is little doubt about the 6-3, 205-pounder's talents, however. During the spring game, the offense seemed to respond to Miller more than any of the other three quarterbacks, and the freshman led three scoring drives in his four series under center. He also has a more developed skill set – throwing the ball and running it – than his fellow competitors at the position.

Q. If the starter isn't Miller, who will it be?

A. Knowing Tressel and the way he has operated over the past decade, the smart money would be on Joe Bauserman. He is a fifth-year senior, has spent two seasons as Pryor's chief backup and finished spring ball the way he began it – operating with the No. 1 offense.

In many ways, Bauserman is a smaller version of Craig Krenzel – a heady player who won't dazzle you with the spectacular play but also one who won't make the game-altering mistake. The 6-1, 230-pounder has a quick trigger, throws a catchable ball and is a veteran presence on an offense that will be looking for leadership during its first five games.

Unfortunately for Bauserman, he didn't have much of a spring game. He completed 4 of 11 passes for 42 yards and a touchdown, but he missed seven of his first nine attempts and was sacked twice in the contest's first five plays.

Clearly behind Miller and Bauserman are sophomore Kenny Guiton and redshirt freshman Taylor Graham. Each had his moments in the spring, but Guiton seemed to regress a little after an excellent spring performance last year. And Graham didn't do himself any favors by getting sacked five times in the spring game.

Q. Could the Buckeyes go with a two-quarterback system in the fall?

A. The possibility can't be ruled out. One could certainly envision a scenario where Bauserman would start the game and Miller would finish it.

What it all boils down to is what Tressel

wants out of his quarterback during those first five games. If he simply wants a caretaker to keep the position warm for Pryor, the choice is likely to be Bauserman. If the goal is to build a foundation for when the suspended players return, you would have to guess the choice would be Miller.

Q. Did OSU find a suitable replacement for Dan "Boom" Herron at tailback?

A. Not only did the Buckeyes find a suitable replacement, they perhaps found three or four. For the first time in a long time, the team has depth to spare at running back and the only problem may be how to divide the carries.

Jordan Hall has done everything asked of him (and more) during his previous two seasons, and now he will be asked to shoulder the load of being a running back/receiver hybrid. Behind him is the interesting tandem of Jaamal Berry and Rod Smith – a home-run hitter and a hammer.

Berry still isn't getting enough carries but makes the most of his opportunities. After averaging a stout 8.3 yards per carry last year, he averaged 8.0 in the spring game – albeit on only two attempts. Meanwhile, Smith appears every bit the hard-nosed bruiser he was advertised to be before preseason academic problems forced him to redshirt last year.

Add Carlos Hyde to the mix as a wild card and Herron's return in mid-October and you get the ingredients for what could be an ultra-putting running attack.

Q. Who emerged at the receiver position this spring?

A. The graduation loss of Dane Sanzenbacher, suspension of DeVier Posey and Duron Carter's decision not to return to Ohio State put the onus on some of the younger receivers to step up, and their spring performances could be best described as uneven.

That was the case last year as well, but Sanzenbacher and Posey were so reliable it didn't matter. This year it does since that duo accounted for 108 of the 131 receptions by OSU wide receivers last season. Corey "Philly" Brown, Chris Fields and T.Y. Williams reportedly turned things up a notch late in the spring, but they will simply have to become more consistent come fall camp.

On the plus side, redshirt freshman Verlon Reed had as good a spring as anyone. The former quarterback has likely jumped into the depth chart mix at the receiver position.

Q. Team observers seem mixed about this year's defense. The unit lost so many veterans that it seems unlikely it can be counted on to be as good as it has been in years past. What is your view of OSU's defense heading into 2011?

A. Losing the services of such veteran performers as Cameron Heyward, Ross Homan, Brian Rolle, Chimdi Chekwa and Dexter Larimore would be a problem for most programs, but lineup turnover never seems to bother OSU defensive coordinator Jim Heacock.

The aforementioned players are gone, but Heacock welcomes back a bevy of superstars-in-waiting such as Nathan Williams, John Simon and Andrew Sweat not to mention up-and-comers like Garrett Goebel, Jonathan Hankins, Jordan Whiting and J.T. Moore.

Perhaps best of all this spring was the emergence of Travis Howard and Dominic Clarke as cornerbacks. With the graduation losses of Chekwa and Devon Torrence, the corner spots were viewed as a potential problem area for the Buckeyes in 2011. Thanks to the springs turned in by Howard and Clarke, that no longer seems to be the case.



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Charter Member

COVER STORY

Football Team Heads Into Important Summer

Continued From Page 1

Herron added that he has never missed a game before during his entire playing career save for being injured or redshirted.

"I've never had any trouble until now," he said. "Everyone is human and people make mistakes. I've definitely learned from them. I just have to keep moving on."

Tressel said his duties will not begin to change until the back half of fall camp when Fickell will assume his role as the interim coach in Tressel's absence.

"Just like for a couple of the players, the world's not going to change (in the coming months)," the OSU head coach said. "They're going to be lifting weights at 6 in the morning or at midnight when we tell them to and I'm going to be doing all the things that I have to do. You get to the back end of the preseason and all of a sudden you're talking about who's going to be in the game and who's going to do what, then that changes a little bit.

"I'm going to worry about that later."

'Crucial' Times Ahead

The worries might come at a later time, but the importance of the coming months is not lost on Brewster.

"This is going to be probably the most crucial three months that this team has had in a long, long time with all the suspension stuff that will be going on next year," the senior center said. "Everybody is going to have to be in the film room. We've done it in the past a little bit, but this year it's going to be really crucial. Everyone knows that."

The Buckeyes do not enter spring drills looking to name starters or solve position battles. The primary focus is on spreading out practice reps and giving players a body of work that can then be studied in the coming months.



JOSH WINSLOW

SEE YOU SOON – Ohio State offensive lineman Mike Adams (75) and running back Dan "Boom" Herron (1) will not play again at home in Ohio Stadium until the Oct. 29 game against Wisconsin.

When it comes to the spring game itself, Tressel said the coaches will not break down the film to look at how the offense or defense performed as a whole. Rather, the focus will be on showing players where they individually need to progress before the team reassembles for fall camp.

"You're looking at kids and what did

they do and did they make good decisions," Tressel said. "Those young guys that were young in that secondary back there, they're going to learn tremendously. Sometimes when you don't learn like that, your progress is slower.

"We wanted to have a competitive offense-defense thing, but on the other hand what

was more important was putting guys out in front of some people and seeing if they could line up. Sometimes it's good for a young person to know just how far he has to go. You don't like to get injuries, but when it gives someone else an opportunity to grow, you take that as a benefit."

As a result, the Buckeyes changed the



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COVER STORY

format of the spring game and held at least two other scrimmage-type practices in an effort to simulate more game conditions.

"We didn't sit around and do a little bit here and a little bit there," Brewster said. "We were taking live reps every day. We did a couple of jersey scrimmages a week to be honest, but that's what you've got to do when you have young guys."

"You learn from your mistakes. It took me a thousand mistakes before I knew the offense like the back of my hand. Taking all those live reps, you can really teach the guys what they need to do. It was hard at times but we stuck through it and we got better."

The coaches are not allowed to oversee summer workouts or 7-on-7 practices, putting the onus on upperclassmen to make sure players are present and preparing. Asked which player will be responsible for organizing the group, junior defensive lineman John Simon said, "I wouldn't say we have one guy who says that. Everyone is motivated to do that and that's the great part of being on this team – everyone is motivated. You don't have to tell anyone. You'll just see them there (at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center)."

Brewster said the situation had already been discussed with the team but did not specify by whom.

"As players, we're going to have to get back together and get that done," he said. "We've got a lot of good leadership on this team. With as many young guys as we have, we do have a lot of older experienced guys as well. We're going to bring those guys along, get in there once or twice a week and go over a couple of things a day so by the time we get to camp we can just go and we don't have to go over little things."

The seniors' hope is that once fall camp rolls around, the Buckeyes will be able to quickly turn their focus toward getting ready for the season.

"You've got to hit the ground running," Brewster said. "We don't have time to go over the basics this time around. That's why we went live so much this spring because we need to get guys ready. Guys did a great job. Guys like (wide receiver) Verlon Reed – nobody knew much about him. He red-shirted but he's being noticed now. I think he did a good job this spring."

As the Buckeyes look to keep focused on the goals at hand rather than the off-the-field distractions, Herron said he is ready to help assume a leadership role.

"I'm pretty much prepared," he said. "I understand what I have to do to help my team out and keep working hard. That day is going to come when I'm going to be able to go back out there and play again. I still have to work hard and study in the film room and lead my guys. When it's time for me to go out there and play I'll definitely be ready."

The senior running back is not the only one seeking the opportunity to lead.

"That unfortunate situation has really made us stronger as a team," Simon said. "You see guys stepping up and taking lead-

ership roles and just preparing us for the season. I feel like I'm taking a little step forward in leadership and helping the guys out. We've got so many leaders on this team that it's a great thing to be a part of."

A Good Spring

Off-the-field distractions aside, the players made available for interviews following the spring game said they felt the team improved in a number of areas.

During his opening statement after the game, Tressel said he felt good about the team's overall attention to detail.

"Sometimes in the spring, you've got this veteran team coming back and some guy sitting in the back of the room saying, 'You know what? I'm not going to play this year anyway,' so he's not razor sharp," the coach said. "I sensed that our guys knew that every person in that room was going to have to make a difference in 2011."

"I think they prepared that way and I think they progressed that way and I also think they know we've got a lot of work to do but we're looking forward to it."

Herron agreed.

"I think everyone understands that everyone has to step up," the senior tailback said. "With the five guys missing games, someone has to step up. At every position guys are trying their best, trying to get better, trying to get on the field and trying to improve every day."

The spring also allowed the coaches to experiment with a few things. Brewster said the Buckeyes worked on far more than they showed the public during the spring game while Herron pointed out that the running backs spent much of the spring running passing routes and serving as wide receivers.

"Everyone was really working hard," Herron said. "The only thing that was a big difference was trying to play a little bit of receiver. That was actually fun for some of us, getting some more guys on the field. I think that really worked out well for us."

Brewster, who enrolled for winter courses as a freshman, said this spring was among the most physical he could remember.

"The main thing was taking as many live reps as we did," he said. "On a daily basis, we were doing (scrimmaging). We were stretching and getting right into (scrimmaging). We usually don't do that but when you have this many young guys you've got to get live reps."

"That's the best way to learn. It's easy to write it on the board but when you're really doing it and making mistakes and seeing it on film, then you can come further."

Near the midway point of spring practice, Tressel said he liked the growth displayed across the board.

"We think spring practice is important," he said. "Most coaches feel as if their spring is going pretty well because guys are making mistakes, they're getting coached, they're



JOSH WINSLOW

READY TO ROCK – Ohio State senior center Michael Brewster (50, center) said the Buckeyes had to get young players ready for action this spring in preparation for missing five key players for five games this fall.

seeing them respond after that and grow a little bit.

"We always talk about the fact that you can't win the championship in the spring but you can lose it if you don't progress to the level that you need to do so in 15 practices. We all have the same rules. The amount of progress that you need to make in each of those situations is huge."

That attitude was reflected by senior defensive end Nathan Williams, who said the fact the team would be missing key players when the 2011 season begins did not impact the spring preparations.

"I guess you could say that I've thought about it but what am I going to do? All I can do is continue being a leader and leading by example to these guys and take it day by day," he said. "I'll hope for the best."

"We always do a good job of handling adversity, so it's just one of those things

you've got to deal with. Hopefully it's a positive at the end of the season."

A little more than one week into the spring, junior linebacker Etienne Sabino said the atmosphere within the locker room felt no different than in years past.

"Honestly, I haven't seen a difference," he said. "I think people have started to realize that our team is very close. Regardless of what other people might say, our team is very close. We're like a family so I haven't seen much of a difference at all."

As he looked back at the spring, Tressel said he was not concerned about the next steps for the team or how things will look come September.

"We were focused to have a really good spring," the coach said. "I'm not worried too much about what lies forward. I want them to get ready to have a great May, June and July."

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

No Matter Scoring, Offense Dominates Spring Game

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Lack of depth at key positions, injuries at others and impending stormy weather April 23 combined for an unusual climax to an unusual spring football season at Ohio State.

Already tasked with finding replacements for more than a dozen players who started the Sugar Bowl against Arkansas, the Buckeyes also needed to use their 15 spring practices as a platform for those who needed to step into roles that will be vacated during the first five games this fall by five suspended players – four of them offensive regulars.

Couple that with a dearth of offensive linemen and injuries to key performers on both sides of the ball and OSU head coach Jim Tressel opted for a scrimmage format over the traditional spring contest pitting two distinct rosters against one another. As a result, the scarlet-clad offense shook off a slow start to take a 59-27 decision over the gray-clothed defense.

The game, which also served as the team's semiannual jersey scrimmage, utilized a unique system that included scoring opportunities for both the offense and defense. In addition to the traditional six points for a touchdown and three for a field goal, the offense was able to garner points for each first down and every play that gained 20 yards or more. Conversely, the defense could score by creating a turnover, blocking kicks or tallying tackles behind the line of scrimmage.

There was no punting in the contest, and each series began at a predetermined spot on the field. As a result, sometimes the offense was charged with driving the length of the field for a score, while other times the defense had to hold when a possession began at its 25-yard line.

Normally, jersey scrimmages during the Tressel era have lasted in excess of two hours, but the April 23 event was limited to just over 80 minutes and 86 plays as thunderstorms circulated throughout Columbus and the surrounding area. The rain held off until about 45 minutes after the scrimmage had concluded, and thunder and lightning did not materialize for nearly two more hours.

In fact, the game was played in 67-degree temperatures with the sun occasionally peeking through an overcast haze.

That setting provided for an announced Ohio Stadium crowd of 44,276, most of whom were on hand eager to see the four-way quarterback battle to replace starter Terrelle Pryor, one of those suspended for the first five games.

During the scrimmage, each quarterback got a like number of series and each flashed some success. Perhaps the best performance of the quartet was turned in by true freshman Braxton Miller, who led three scoring drives during his four series under center.

Two of those drives resulted in touchdowns, including a 92-yard march during which Miller completed a 17-yard pass to junior tailback Jordan Hall and a 20-yard strike over the middle to senior receiver DeVier Posey. Later in the contest, Miller

found sophomore receiver Corey "Philly" Brown for a 15-yard touchdown connection.

Miller finished the afternoon as the only quarterback who completed more than 50 percent of his passes. He connected on 7 of 12 pass attempts for 73 yards and the touchdown to Brown. The freshman also led his fellow QB competitors in rushing, scrambling four times for 19 yards.

While Miller's performance was excellent, especially for a signal caller playing his first game in front of an Ohio Stadium crowd, the other three quarterbacks had their moments as well and each threw one touchdown pass during the scrimmage.

Sophomore Kenny Guiton had the first TD toss of the afternoon, dropping in a 17-yard pass to redshirt freshman Verlon Reed, while redshirt freshman Taylor Graham had the prettiest pass of the contest – hooking up with classmate T.Y. Williams for a 68-yard scoring bomb. Then, on the final play of the afternoon, senior Joe Bauserman completed a 16-yard touchdown toss to redshirt freshman walk-on receiver Ryan Ross.

For the contest, Guiton finished 5 for 11 passing for 43 yards while Bauserman completed 4 of 11 attempts for 42 yards. He was also sacked twice. Graham was 4 of 9 for 91 yards but was sacked five times.

Those looking for any kind of pecking order at the quarterback position following spring were left mostly with conjecture. Bauserman played the first two series of the contest with the No. 1 offense. The following

16 series were divided evenly – four each among the QB candidates.

Afterward, Tressel did nothing to tip his hand.

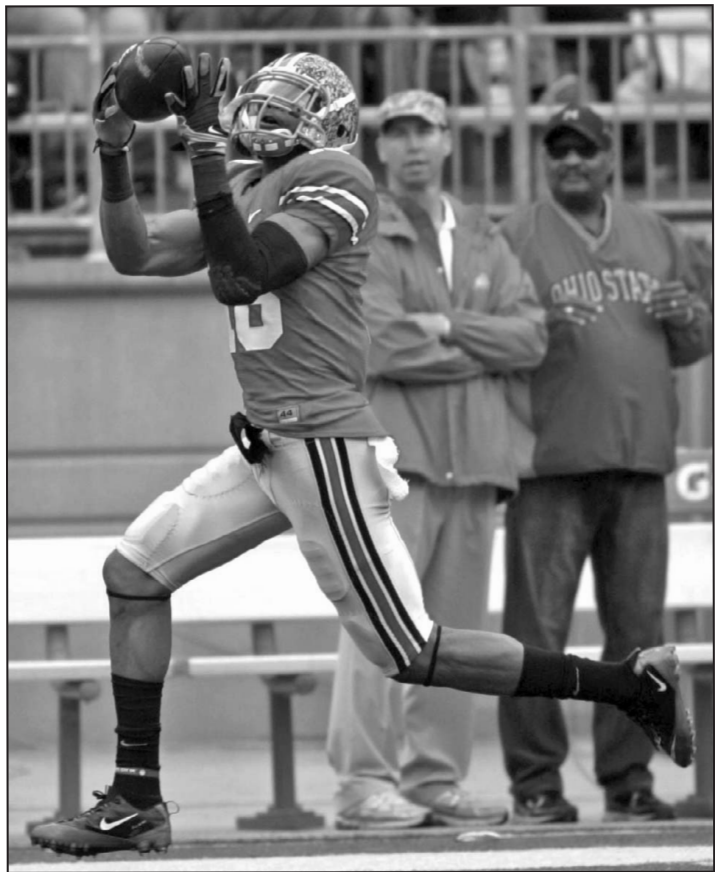
"We've been giving those four equal reps," he said. "When we figure it out, we're going to play whoever we need to."

As far as the scrimmage itself was concerned, Tressel said, "So much has to do with what the other 10 (players on the offensive unit) are doing. Braxton probably played more relaxed and had a little more fun than he has had. Joe and Kenny showed that they have been around and can manage our offense. And we have to learn as young quarterbacks that you can't get sacked in the red zone."

Although it wound up on the short end of the scoreboard, the defense dictated the early tempo with three sacks – one each in the first three series. Senior defensive end Nathan Williams dumped Bauserman for a 6-yard loss on the third play of the scrimmage, and sophomore defensive back Dominic Clarke followed two plays later when he got to Bauserman on a corner blitz for a 9-yard sack.

Sophomore linebacker Jordan Whiting kept things going six plays after that when he corralled Graham and threw him for an 8-yard loss.

The Gray eventually got four more sacks in the contest – one each from junior linebacker Dorian Bell, redshirt freshman end J.T. Moore, true freshman safety Jeremy Cash and true freshman lineman Joel Hale.



JOSH WINSLOW

HE'S GOT IT – Redshirt freshman T.Y. Williams (18) watches a pass from quarterback Taylor Graham fall into his hands. Williams scored a 68-yard touchdown on the play.

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL



JOSH WINSLOW

WHERE IS IT? – Ohio State cornerback Travis Howard (7) just misses deflecting the ball, and walk-on receiver Ryan Ross (84, left) is there to haul it in for the final score of the 2011 spring game.

Following the game, Williams said he was not concerned with how the scoreboard read at the end.

“We really didn’t pay much attention to that,” he said. “Our focus was on doing our jobs and exciting the coaches when they turn on the film. I thought our guys did a good job responding this spring.”

Rolling After Slow Start

Thanks in part to the early sacks by Williams, Clarke and Whiting, the Gray jumped out to a 9-3 lead. A couple of first downs got the Scarlet closer before sophomore kicker Drew Basil drilled a 22-yard field goal to tie the score at 9.

Two plays later, Hale sacked Graham for two points and then the defense blocked a 35-yard field-goal try by junior Ben Buchanan for two more points and a 12-9 advantage for the Gray.

That was the last advantage for the defense, however.

The offense began its next series at the Gray 25, and Miller directed a short drive that culminated in a 27-yard field goal from Basil. That tied the score at 13 and the Scarlet never looked back.

Starting at the Gray 25 again, Guiton took over and took only two plays to get the offense into the end zone. First the sophomore QB connected on an 8-yard pass to sophomore tailback Jaamal Berry, and then Guiton lofted a nice pass to Reed, who turned the play into a 17-yard touchdown.

Left-footed redshirt freshman walk-on kicker Russell Doup added the PAT to give the Scarlet its first lead of the game at 20-13.

Possession for the offense quickly changed to deep in its own territory, and a pair of Bauserman-led series fizzled with three-and-outs. On the ensuing possession, however, Miller took over and drove his team 92 yards for a touchdown.

The drive began innocently enough with Hall picking up 8 yards on a third-and-2 rush. Then Miller hit Hall for a 17-yard pass play before Rod Smith raced around left end for 11 yards. Three plays later, Posey shook loose from his coverage on a crossing pattern, and Miller threw a 20-yard strike that gave the Scarlet a first down at the Gray 24.

Three plays after that, junior tight end Jake Stoneburner saved the touchdown march with a juggling, one-handed stab of a 6-yard reception, and three plays later Hall bulled his way into the end zone from 5 yards out.

Basil added the extra point to give the offense a 33-17 advantage.

The Scarlet got on the scoreboard again two possessions later when Graham engineered a 97-yard march, the longest drive of the day. Smith carried on the first three plays of the series, chewing up gains of 3, 5 and 6 yards, and then after Graham found Williams on an 8-yard pass, sophomore walk-on running back Spencer DeLande rushed for 7 yards to give his team a first down at their own 32.

Graham threw incomplete on the next two plays but on the third stepped into a throw to Williams, who had beaten Gray defender Vincent Petrella down the near sideline. Williams gathered in the perfect spiral at about the 35-yard line and raced untouched the rest of the way to the end zone.

Basil tacked on another extra point, and the Scarlet had pushed its lead to 44-19.

Back came Miller on the next possession and the freshman directed another short scoring drive. He converted a third-and-5 himself with a 5-yard scramble and then tossed his 15-yard scoring strike to Brown, who got away from junior safety Orhian Johnson in the end zone.

By that time, it was 53-19 in favor of the offense and Bauserman provided the finishing touch, capping the afternoon’s

Spring Game Box Score

Scarlet 59, Gray 27

April 23, 2011 — Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio

Touchdowns and Field Goals

- SCARLET** — Basil, 22 yard field goal; 5 plays, 20 yards.
- SCARLET** — Basil, 27 yard field goal; 6 plays, 15 yards.
- SCARLET** — Reed, 17 yard pass from Guiton (Doup kick); 2 plays, 25 yards.
- SCARLET** — J.Hall, 5 yard run (Basil kick); 14 plays, 92 yards.
- SCARLET** — T.Y.Williams, 68 yard pass from Graham (Basil kick); 8 plays, 97 yards.
- SCARLET** — C.Brown (WR), 15 yard pass from Miller (Basil kick); 4 plays, 25 yards.
- SCARLET** — Ross, 16 yard pass from Bauserman (no kick); 4 plays, 25 yards.

Att. — 44,276.

Weather — 67 degrees, cloudy; wind, SSW 1 mph.

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — SCARLET: J.Hall 8-37; Herron 6-37; R.Smith 7-36; Miller 4-19; Berry 2-16; Hyde 6-7; S.DeLande 1-7; Boren 1-1; Bauserman 3-(-10); Graham 5-(-30).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — SCARLET: Miller 7-12-0-73-1; Guiton 5-11-0-43-1; Bauserman 4-11-0-42-1; Graham 4-9-0-91-1.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — SCARLET: T.Y.Williams 3-83; Heurman 3-14; Posey 2-26; Reed 2-25; J.Hall 2-21; Berry 2-14; Stoneburner 2-11; Ross 1-16; Fields 1-15; C.Brown (WR) 1-15; S.DeLande 1-9.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds) — GRAY: None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — GRAY: None.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) — GRAY: Clarke 1.0-9; Whiting 1.0-8; Bell 1.0-7; Hale 1.0-6; N.Williams 1.0-6; Moore 1.0-5; Cash 1.0-4.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — GRAY: Moore 1.5-6; N.Williams 1.5-6; Sabino 1.5-2; Clarke 1.0-9; Whiting 1.0-8; Bell 1.0-7; Hale 1.0-6; Cash 1.0-4; Simon 1.0-3; Sweat 0.5-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) — GRAY: Sweat 4-6-10; Whiting 4-3-7; Cash 6-0-6; Sabino 3-3-6; Moore 3-3-6; Petrella 3-2-5; Roby 1-2-3; Tanner 1-2-3; Hankins 0-3-3; Oliver 1-1-2; Bellamy 1-1-2; Hale 1-1-2; Bell 1-1-2; Clarke 1-1-2; N.Williams 1-1-2; Simon 1-1-2; Howard 1-1-2; Jackson 0-2-2; Shazier 0-2-2; Hagan 1-0-1; Thomas 0-1-1; Goebel 0-1-1; Johnson 0-1-1; Frazier 0-1-1.

festivities with a 16-yard pass to Ross, who managed to spin away from the coverage of senior cornerback Travis Howard for the touchdown.

While the four quarterbacks combined for 20 completions in 43 attempts for 249 yards and four TDs, the running game generated only 120 net yards on 43 carries. Seven sacks for the Gray accounted for 45 yards in losses, somewhat skewing the rushing total.

Hall and senior Dan “Boom” Herron tied for game-high rushing honors. Hall carried eight times for 37 yards and a touchdown while Herron had six carries for 37 yards.

Just behind them was Smith, who powered his way to 36 yards on seven attempts. Miller was next with 19 yards followed by Berry, who carried twice for 16 yards.

Williams was the top receiver with three catches for 83 yards and a touchdown while true freshman tight end Jeff Heurman had three receptions for 14 yards. Posey, Reed, Hall, Berry and Stoneburner had two catches each.

Defensively, the Gray was led by senior linebacker Andrew Sweat, who was credited with 10 tackles. Whiting was next with seven stops while Cash had six tackles, all solos. Moore also finished with six tackles.

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Offense Takes Positive Steps During Spring

By JEFF SVOBODA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Going into spring football, there were plenty of questions that needed answered for the Ohio State offense.

The biggest one, of course, was under center, where a spirited battle between four players of varying experience took place as the Buckeyes try to replace the suspended Terrelle Pryor for the first five games.

There was also the question of who would step up to fill the void at running back left by the suspended Dan "Boom" Herron. Out wide, the Buckeyes had to find players to replace the suspended DeVier Posey and the departed Dane Sanzenbacher, and 2½ spots on the offensive line needed filled because of the graduation of guards Justin Boren and Bryant Browning and the suspension of left tackle Mike Adams.

On April 23, it appeared a lot of those questions were well on their way to being answered with the way the offense performed in Ohio Stadium during the annual spring game. The offense struggled early but rounded into form as the day went on, scoring five touchdowns on the way to a 59-27 victory over the defense in a modified scoring system.

"We started off kind of slow and you're going to have days like that," Herron said after the offense held on to the coveted scarlet practice jerseys for winning the scrimmage. "I think we finished pretty good. Guys were catching balls, the offensive line was doing a great job and the quarterbacks were doing a great job."

The performance wrapped up a spring during which the players said the offense made clear strides even without Pryor, who didn't take any reps while continuing to rehab from offseason foot surgery stemming from an injury suffered late in the Sugar Bowl win vs. Arkansas.

According to the players, the only down note was an April 16 scrimmage in the Horseshoe during which the offense scored no touchdowns and turned the ball over four times.

"We had 15 practices – 14 that were really sharp," center Michael Brewster said after the spring game. "The only one that was a little down was (April 16) but I thought we came out today and guys were more relaxed, and you get the adrenaline flowing with people watching you. Especially the quarterbacks. They looked really relaxed today and that makes you feel good."



JOSH WINSLOW

DUAL THREAT – Freshman quarterback Braxton Miller (5) added 19 rushing yards on four carries to go with 7-of-12 passing for 73 yards.

The questions aren't quite answered yet – especially under center, where no one appeared to separate himself in the battle for Pryor's spot – but a number of young players stepped up and gave the team confidence going forward for when fall practice resumes in August.

"At a place like Ohio State, we don't recruit kids to come in and sit on the bench," Posey said. "We want kids to compete. We want kids to grow. This year is a unique year because they have to grow faster, and at the same time asking them to do that, it might be a bit much but those kids can handle it."

"I think with that growth and being at a place like this, I don't feel like you have to really rebuild. I feel at a place like this, we reload."

What follows is a position-by-position look back at the spring as well as some analysis of the Ohio State offense.

Quarterback

As expected, there were pluses and minuses to the quarterback play when the media was allowed to check out prac-

tice. That was summed up in the spring game as the four quarterbacks – senior Joe Bauserman, sophomore Kenny Guiton, redshirt freshman Taylor Graham and true freshman Braxton Miller – completed only 20 of 43 passes but racked up 249 yards and four touchdowns without an interception.

"We're all battling," Bauserman said. "We're all working hard and making strides. We're all getting better. Today we all played fairly well. We all made good plays, we all made bad plays. We're just moving forward."

Consistency continues to be where the Buckeyes will work because all four quarterbacks – each of whom received equal reps during the spring – bring something to the table.

Bauserman, the former professional baseball player who showed up in the fall of 2007, is noted for his knowledge of the offense going into his senior campaign. He also showed signs of improvement a season ago, completing 16 of 22 passes for 174 yards, two touchdowns and an interception.

However, the pick came during a less-than-inspiring cameo in relief of Pryor when the starter was injured during a dogfight at Illinois, and Bauserman continues to sometimes hold the ball too long while going through his progressions. A decent scrambler, he also lacks top-end physical attributes at just 6-1.

Guiton continued to show progress after being a late throw-in to the 2009 recruiting class. A good runner, the sophomore seems more suited to the spread elements Ohio State uses with Pryor and is noted as a hard worker and inspiring teammate by everyone on the team.

Graham, meanwhile, is much more of a pocket passer but has a rocket arm, which he showed off while hooking up with T.Y. Williams for a 68-yard touchdown pass in the spring game. The redshirt freshman also has a firm command of the offense, though he took five sacks in the spring

game and was chided by head coach Jim Tressel in the postgame for the negative plays.

Then there's Miller, the five-star quarterback recruit who entered Ohio State in January and impressed with how he grew during the 15 practices while working mostly with the second and third units. Miller boasts excellent mobility and pocket sense, and while he must continue improving within the system, Tressel said he has just as much of a crack at the starting job as any of his competitors come the fall.

"Quarterback and center are very hard positions to learn here," Brewster said after watching Miller go 7 for 12 with a touchdown in the spring game while rushing for 19 yards. "In three weeks, if you can take a few things out of that, you're going to be doing well. I think today, with shrinking the playbook down, he felt a lot more comfortable out there. He was just trying to make plays."

Posey added that the sky was the limit for the Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne product – with a caveat.

"That kid really has something special about him," the senior receiver said. "It's going to take time to get to know the plays, get to know our system just to be comfortable. At a place like this, you just don't hand a job over to a true freshman. You have to earn it, and I feel like Braxton has to show a little bit more urgency. I don't know how urgent he is."

"He's a laid-back kid and it kind of reflects in the film room, it reflects on the field. The conversation I have with Braxton all the time is, I say, 'You have to learn how to practice hard.' I feel like that comes with maturity. I feel like he'll get there when the time is right."

Running Back

It's no secret Ohio State has a treasure trove of talent at this position, and that was proven yet again in the spring game when Herron, junior Jordan Hall, sophomore Jaamal Berry and redshirt freshman Rod Smith combined for 23 rushes for 126 yards, an average of 5.5 yards per carry.

Fresh off his first 1,000-yard season, Herron continued to show the talent that made him an All-Big Ten back during his junior campaign a season ago. The Warren (Ohio) Harding product played with the first team for much of the spring and was his usual workmanlike self, running hard, breaking tackles and squirting through holes in the line.

"I'll keep working hard because my day will come when I will be able to play again," Herron said. "I have to stay in shape, keep working out, just keep doing all the little things right."

In his stead, four scholarship tailbacks will continue to battle for time through the fall. Hall might have the slightest of edges for a starting role after two seasons as the No. 3 tailback that have yielded 409 yards and three touchdowns on 85 carries.

Tressel specifically pointed to the elusive 5-9, 190-pounder with excellent vision as someone who made great strides in spring, and Hall also adds versatility with his ability to split into the slot or catch passes out of the backfield.

Berry should be counted on more as well going into his sophomore campaign after rushing 32 times for 266 yards and a 67-yard touchdown last season. Blessed with excellent quickness and moves, Berry

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Offensive Players On The Spot

is a home-run threat every time he touches the ball and looked better than he ever has this spring.

After arriving late in Columbus because of an eligibility issue, Smith reportedly turned heads last year in practice during his redshirt season and appears to be the total package at 6-3, 230 pounds. He used his impressive combination of power and speed to evade tacklers through this spring, and he should be a major part of the offense come the fall if he works on fine-tuning things such as blocking and pass catching.

Finally, sophomore Carlos Hyde still boasts excellent size at 6-0, 238 pounds and was used as a pass catcher out of the backfield more this spring than in the past.

"They're getting better every day," Herron said. "That's what they're supposed to do and that's what I stay on them about. I think they're doing a great job right now of just working hard, staying in the film room, getting their body right and doing the little things right."

At fullback, junior Zach Boren again led the way backed up by classmate Adam Homan, while redshirt freshman defensive linemen David Durham was moved to the position midway through the spring and looked suited to it.

Wide Receiver/Tight End

Tressel admits his coaching staff had some trepidation in the early throes of spring at this position, which must be totally rebuilt for the start of the season.

"I think after about three practices, we were thinking, 'Oh my gosh, we might be in three tight ends, a fullback and a tailback (set) because they are so young,'" Tressel said. "(But) I thought they really came along this spring."

That is good news considering only 11 catches from the wide receiver spot – eight by sophomore Corey "Philly" Brown and three from fellow sophomore Chris Fields – return from a year ago for the opening five games of the season.

To add insult to injury, Posey has looked nearly unstoppable during the spring, taking a leap forward and channeling his considerable gifts all in the right direction.

Brown and Fields look to be the favorites to begin the year as the starters, at least among those players who took part in spring ball. Brown has top-end speed and started to use it this spring as some of the off-target deep balls he just missed hauling in a season ago have turned into catches. As evidenced by his two dropped passes in the spring game, however, the sophomore must continue to improve his hands.

Fields was a four-star prospect coming out of Painesville (Ohio) Harvey and spent most of last year's fall camp as the third wideout before being passed by Brown during the season. Fields didn't stand out this spring but has a combination of speed and smoothness that should help him when the season comes around.

Among those youngsters vying for more playing time, redshirt freshman Verlon Reed appeared to make the biggest move. After being converted from quarterback to receiver last season, he took a leap forward this spring when it came to making plays.

"I feel like he made the position change really quickly," Posey said. "In camp last year, I saw some great things for him. He's just technically sound. He does everything right."

Redshirt freshmen Williams and James Louis made strides as well, though both need to continue to make steps. Williams

• **Joe Bauserman, quarterback** – When spring practice began, we opined that Bauserman would probably be fairly close to perfect to win the starting job. Unfortunately for the fifth-year senior, he was not perfect. He seemed steady enough to begin each practice session – at least the handful of which media members were privileged to watch – with the No. 1 offense, but there didn't seem to be a whole lot of production. For example, Bauserman was under center for six of the 18 spring-game series, but until he completed his final two passes, he was 2 for 9 for 17 yards and two sacks. Was that enough to hold off freshman phenom Braxton Miller? We think we know the answer, but only the OSU coaching staff knows for sure.



Joe Bauserman

• **Rod Smith, tailback** – The 6-3, 230-pound redshirt freshman certainly did nothing to dispel the comparisons to former OSU tailback Chris "Beanie" Wells, running with authority every time his number was called. Like Wells, Smith appears to be one of those running backs who wears down opposing defenses – short gain after short gain until he pops a big one. With the Buckeyes more than likely employing a tailback-by-committee approach this fall while Dan "Boom" Herron is suspended and junior Jordan Hall looking more and more like a receiver as well as a running back, Smith could be in for a lot of early-season carries.

• **Andrew Norwell, offensive line** – We were eager to see the 6-5, 308-pound sophomore getting reps at left tackle this spring since Norwell is believed to be the likely replacement

when Mike Adams begins to serve his five-game suspension. However, with such a dearth of offensive line depth this spring and right tackle J.B. Shugarts missing some time late in spring camp, Norwell was seen mostly on the right side. He also got some spring reps at guard – as did several other offensive linemen – which can also be beneficial for Norwell and the Buckeyes in terms of versatility.

• **Marcus Hall, offensive line** – Like Norwell, Hall found himself all over the offensive line this spring. The 6-5, 321-pounder was most often seen as the No. 2 left tackle behind Adams, but he also saw time at right tackle and the guard positions. It might border on beating a dead horse, but with an offensive line lacking in depth, it is vitally important that your frontline performers be able to play more than one position. Thankfully, it appears Hall can do that.

• **Corey "Philly" Brown, receiver** – With Dane Sanzenbacher gone and DeVier Posey suspended for the first five games of the regular season, we kept waiting for Brown to step up this spring. We're still waiting. The 5-11, 170-pound sophomore had his moments and still has as much upside as anyone on the team, but he seemed to be pressing at times and that led to some curious drops. Brown caught only one pass in the spring game, and while it was a 15-yard touchdown toss from Miller, the sophomore receiver is simply going to have to be more productive come fall.

– Mark Rea

appeared ahead of Louis because of his size – he stands 6-5 – and ability to get open, but Williams also must continue to work on catching the ball.

"They had some rough days," Posey said of the young wideouts. "They had some days where they didn't want to play football anymore, and they had some days where they looked like All-Americans. I felt like that was key to get those guys on a straight line and keep them confident. They'll get there. They're working pretty hard."

The Buckeyes also looked well-stocked at tight end with juniors Jake Stoneburner and Reid Fragel as well as true freshman Jeff Heurman each showing the ability to both block and catch passes. Stoneburner also spent more time split out from the line in an effort to make greater use of his ability to stretch the field and create mismatches against linebackers.

"With DeVier being gone and we have a bunch of young wide receivers, they're going to ask me to do a little bit more at a receiver spot because I think they've grown in confidence with me," Stoneburner said. "I think my role will expand but I'll still definitely be a tight end."

Offensive Line

The line had no choice but to get better in the spring. With only 11 players around for spring – just eight of them scholarship players – the big uglies received plenty of reps during each of the 15 practices.

"I'm really pleased with the progress that our team made and especially our line made this spring," Brewster said.

While the depth wasn't there as much as in the past, the Buckeyes came to the realization there are at least seven guys who could see and deserve major playing time come the fall.

Brewster and senior right tackle J.B. Shugarts are penciled in as starters, while Adams will likely return at left tackle when his suspension concludes. His spot for the start of the season as well as the two guard spots will go to some combination of

sophomores Jack Mewhort, Corey Linsley, Marcus Hall and Andrew Norwell.

All four of those players were rated four stars or above coming out of high school by Scout.com, and all appear ready to see the field after working with offensive coordinator and line coach Jim Bollman.

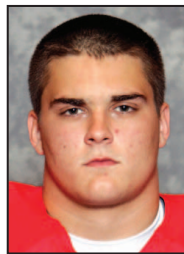
"We have seven guys that are really good, and with Mike gone there's going to be six guys plus three coming in that are going to be in the mix," Brewster said. "It's going to be a battle through camp. Obviously you have me and J.B., and the other guys are kind of battling and you really want to see them keep working hard."

Brewster was again the driving force of the line and a team spokesperson throughout the spring, and he'll likely be a captain come fall. Shugarts missed the

end of the spring with a shoulder injury but will return for his final campaign as the starter, and he was dependable again when on the field during spring. Adams received plaudits for continuing to improve after a breakout 2010 season in which he earned first-team All-Big Ten honors.

Of the four youngsters, each played more than one position during the spring but no one looked out of place or overwhelmed at any point. While pass blocking was occasionally spotty – especially when the second unit was in – the team's ability to run block appeared to be sharp throughout spring.

True freshman Tommy Brown also got better as the spring went along at right tackle, while walk-ons Ivan Blackman, Eric Kramer and Ben St. John got valuable time, although Blackman had to leave the spring game on a cart after suffering what appeared to be a leg injury.



J.B. Shugarts

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Despite Final Scrimmage, Defense Has Solid Spring

By **MARCUS HARTMAN**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The defense wound up behind on the scoreboard after two of the three scrimmages Ohio State held during spring practice, but that was of little concern as the Buckeyes looked ahead to a summer of preparation for the 2011 regular season.

"You've got to take into consideration that the offense had the ball so many times inside our own 30, so they're going to score points. Big deal," senior defensive end Nathan Williams said after the offense took a 59-27 win during the April 23 jersey scrimmage that also served as the annual Scarlet and Gray Game.

"We just want overall for our defense to get better, and hopefully film will tell."

The defense trailed by a 56-45 tally at the end of the first scrimmage of spring, held April 9, and one week later the defense rebounded with a 42-16 win thanks to creating a plethora of turnovers, tackles for loss and three-and-outs.

There should be no lack of good film for the coaching staff to analyze from all three position groups, where experience is lacking but talent is not.

"When you're young, it's tough for every single position," said Williams, who saw a lot of progress from a lot of players this spring. "They don't give up nearly as many plays as they did when they were younger."

"The key word with all this is stepping up. Like (former NFL head coach) Jon Gruden told us when he came to visit (April 21), someone's got to step up and they've done a great job. I feel like we've improved so much during this spring, and it makes us excited for the fall."

The following is BSB's look at the Ohio State defense following 15 spring practice sessions as well as some analysis.

Defensive Line

Williams entered spring as the most experienced member of the unit, having started as a junior after spelling starter Thaddeus Gibson the two years before that.

He left sounding like a player ready to take on a leadership role during his final summer in Columbus.

As Williams is likely the only senior in line for serious playing time up front, defensive coordinator and line coach Jim Heacock must be happy to see that.

Williams was active throughout all three scrimmages, including a sack in the spring game, and looks headed toward a fantastic finale to his career.

He figures to be backed up at the Leo defensive end spot by redshirt freshman J.T. Moore, who also had a sack in the spring game and possesses the size (6-1, 252) and athleticism to both rush the passer and drop into coverage at times.

Next in line would be senior Solomon Thomas, but he is suspended for the first five games. Heacock could also turn to junior walk-on Stewart Smith, but the coach might be thinking about plugging incoming freshman Steve Miller into a backup role at Leo after the coaches opted to move redshirt freshman David Durham to fullback.

There is no shortage of depth anywhere else on the line.

Although sophomore Johnathan Hankins was looked upon as the likely successor to

Dexter Larimore at nose tackle, he spent a good part of the spring playing the other tackle spot or at the strongside defensive end position occupied by Cameron Heyward for much of the past four seasons.

That is likely an indication the coaching staff likes Hankins' speed and agility even more than his 6-3, 325-pound frame. Hankins and John Simon spent the spring alternating between strongside end and weakside tackle depending on the strength of the offensive formation.

Simon was thought of as an interior player when he signed with Ohio State out of Youngstown (Ohio) Cardinal Mooney, but he showed with sacks in both the second stadium scrimmage and the spring game that he has the speed to get to the quarterback off the edge.

A slew of players had impressive moments backing up that pair this spring, starting with sophomore Adam Bellamy. Probably ready to start at a variety of other schools, the 6-4, 302-pounder has a good combination of power and ability.

Bellamy looks like the next in line when Simon or Hankins needs a breather, but classmate Melvin Fellows pushed him during the first half of April until an unidentified injury put Fellows on the sideline again after the second stadium scrimmage. Up to that point, the 6-5, 270-pounder had shown reporters the explosive strength and quickness that made him a five-star recruit as a senior at Garfield Heights, Ohio.

Though still raw and developing, redshirt freshman Darryl Baldwin had a couple of bright moments during the spring as well, and true freshman Joel Hale flashed loads of potential. Hale chalked up a sack in the spring game.

As for nose guard, that looks like the domain of junior Garrett Goebel. He has been drawing raves for his practice performances since his freshman season, but he looks ready for his first full-time role this year. At 6-3, 290 pounds, the former high school wrestling champion knows leverage and can plug up the middle of an offensive line.

His backup during spring ball was something of a surprise. Senior Evan Blankenship has been mostly an afterthought since early in his career, and even a move from offensive line to defense created barely a ripple last year because of the abundance of talent Heacock has recruited. However, the 6-3, 275-pounder more than held his own at nose tackle on the second team this spring.

"We don't have Dexter in the middle clogging things up and Cam just bullying people, but there's a new dynamic theme going on with the D-line and that's just, 'Attack, attack, attack,'" Williams said.

"We can't get enough of trying to go get the quarterback. Throughout the spring I think we did a good job getting after the quarterback, so I think Coach Heacock is going to take that into consideration that we improved as a defensive line."

Linebacker

A pair of elder statesmen look locked in atop the depth chart, but who fills the third linebacker role this fall remains anyone's guess.

Senior Andrew Sweat slid seamlessly into the weakside linebacker role as expected in place of graduated senior Ross Homan

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

while junior Etienne Sabino ascended to Brian Rolle's former spot in the middle.

Although he started on the strong side last season, Sweat's ability to read, react and run make him better suited to play on the weak side, and he acknowledged being happier there for his last go-round.

Sabino sat out last season to give himself a chance to start for two seasons, and by most accounts he is ready to do just that. The 6-3, 242-pounder is a physical marvel who has learned to stop overthinking the game and let his tools take over. He can deliver a blow with the best of them and possesses excellent speed.

The next-best of the linebacker bunch this spring looked to be Dorian Bell, a sophomore who had to deal with some maturity issues but has no lack of talent. A muscular 6-1, 225-pounder, Bell plays with reckless abandon that can produce big plays for both sides, but his teammates praised the progress he made this season on and off the field.

The staff played with a lineup that saw Bell play on the weak side with Sweat in the middle and Sabino on the strong side, so Bell could find his way onto the field this season. He was expected to receive competition from Storm Klein this spring, but the junior missed most of the month with an ailing hamstring. Sophomore Jordan Whiting figures to have a say in who plays this fall after he made a handful of standout plays in the spring as well.

Senior walk-on Tony Jackson saw time this spring at strongside linebacker as did freshman early enrollee Ryan Shazier, who had a pair of tackles in the spring game.

Junior Jonathan Newsome was expected to compete for time there but was in and out of practice all spring dealing with what Tressell indicated were academic issues, so that position seems far from settled heading into pre-season camp.

Defensive Back

Ohio State looked loaded at cornerback this spring, but safety was something of an adventure. The latter was also true of the hybrid Star position.

First the good news.

Although position coach Taver Johnson found himself in need of a new starter at cornerback for the first time since the spring of 2009, he had to like a lot of what he saw.

Junior Travis Howard, who played extensively last season as the primary backup to now-graduated starters Devon Torrence and Chimdi Chekwa, changed from No. 18 to No. 7 in hopes of mimicking fellow Florida native Chris Gamble, an All-Big Ten cornerback for Ohio State in 2002 and '03.

That mission got off to a good start as Howard showed he has the long arms, quickness and instincts to be a standout this fall.

First in line to play opposite him is sophomore Dominic Clarke, an in-your-face type of player who frequently made life difficult for receivers this spring. Both looked comfortable dropping into coverage or locking up receivers one on one.

Behind them, there may not be much drop-off.

Dionte Allen, a transfer who spent three years at Florida State before sitting out last season and standing out on the OSU practice squad, is a big hitter who looks ready to make a big impact, while redshirt freshman Bradley Roby has a nose for the ball that helped him come up with a pair of interceptions during the second scrimmage at the stadium.

Roby and Allen have each been described as players with enough comfort in man coverage to give the coaching staff reason to play less of the zone it has typically preferred during the Tressell era.



JOSH WINSLOW

EASY ADJUSTMENT – Senior Andrew Sweat (42), seen here hitting running back Jordan Hall (7), has had little trouble moving to the weakside linebacker position.

There was some bad news at cornerback, however, as redshirt freshman Adam Griffin missed much of the spring with an undisclosed injury and senior Donnie Evege saw the premature end to his career because of a major knee injury. Additionally, Allen sat out the spring game with what was believed to be a shoulder problem. It is not expected to linger into the fall, however.

Meanwhile, health was the main factor clouding the picture at safety.

Orhian Johnson returned to claim the starting spot he held for much of his sophomore season last year, but the other safety slot was a revolving door because of injuries.

Senior Nate Oliver and sophomores Zach Domicone, Christian Bryant and Jamie Wood all took turns with the No. 1 unit, but only Oliver was healthy at the end of spring. Domicone sat out the spring game with a bad hamstring, Wood missed the last week with a

shoulder problem and Bryant was out with an undisclosed malady.

Those setbacks were on top of the knee injuries that kept junior C.J. Barnett and sophomore Corey Brown out for all of spring practice.

On the bright side, space was cleared for freshmen Ron Tanner and Jeremy Cash, both early enrollees, to get plenty of reps as the month wore on.

Both are listed at 190 pounds and bring a physical presence to the field, although their pleasant plays were sometimes offset with missed assignments as they learned on the job.

Cash was credited with six solo tackles, including a sack, in the spring game while Tanner had three stops.

The nickel back or Star position also was tough to get a read on during spring ball because assumed starter Tyler Moeller was held out of contact as he continues to recover

from a torn pectoral muscle. Bryant would likely be No. 2 if healthy, but his absence let the coaches try a few different players at what has become an increasingly important position over the past few seasons.

That included Oliver and redshirt freshman Chad Hagan, who did not practice during his first year at Ohio State because of a fractured shin but started at Star in the spring game and played some outside linebacker as well.

At 6-0, 225 pounds, Hagan is the heaviest of all the potential Stars and could present an intriguing option at some point in the future if he proves able to run like a defensive back and hit like a linebacker.

Senior walk-on Chris Maxwell also saw significant time at Star and outside linebacker during the second scrimmage at the stadium. He figures to help on special teams this fall, as does fellow walk-on Nate Ebner, another senior safety.

Defensive Players On The Spot

• **Etienne Sabino, linebacker** – Mission accomplished for Sabino. The 6-3, 242-pound junior admits that taking a redshirt last year was the toughest thing he's had to do in his young life, but it seems to be paying dividends. Signaling that his mental struggles were a thing of the past, Sabino seemed much more at ease during the spring and let his natural ability flow. That natural talent was on full display from impressive speed to several bone-jarring, teeth-rattling tackles. Sabino's spring-game performance – six tackles, including 1½ for loss – could be just the beginning of something really special.

• **Garrett Goebel, defensive line** – Goebel entered spring with an opportunity to win a starting job on the interior and it seems he did just that. The 6-3, 290-pound junior appeared to nail down the starting nose guard spot and consistently drew praise from defensive coordinator and line coach Jim Heacock for his constant motor. Goebel would seem to be the perfect successor to Dexter Larimore – both high school wrestling champs who excel at getting low and plugging holes.

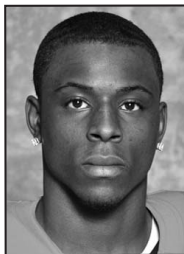
• **Tyler Moeller, star** – As spring practice progressed, it became increasingly difficult to gauge the progress of Moeller, who is coming off surgery to repair a torn pectoral muscle. He spent the entire 15 practice sessions in a blue jersey, signifying

that he was held out of all contact drills. Based upon past performances, we know the 6-0, 210-pound senior will be one of the leaders of this year's defense. Here's hoping he can enjoy an injury-free 2011.

• **Dionte Allen, cornerback** – Allen entered the spring as one of the odds-on favorites to replace either Devon Torrence or Chimdi Chekwa as one of the Buckeyes' starting cornerbacks. But did he finish the spring that way? The jury is out for a couple of reasons. First, some of the team's other corner prospects had excellent springs while Allen was held out of drills near the end of camp for what reportedly was a shoulder problem. Allen battled some injuries during his time at Florida State, so durability may be the largest hurdle standing between him and a starting job in the fall. Stay tuned.

• **Travis Howard/Dominic Clarke, cornerback** – Both Howard and Clarke had excellent springs and will likely begin fall camp penciled in as the starters. One of the reasons none of Ohio State's young receiver prospects had particularly good springs was because they had these guys guarding them most of the time. Perhaps best of all, both seem to possess above-average man coverage skills, meaning the Buckeyes will perhaps employ less zone and apply more pressure to opposing quarterbacks.

– Mark Rea



Travis Howard

QB Battle Has Spotlight During Spring Game

The first thought that came into my mind as I prepared to watch the Ohio State spring scrimmage was "Which position will I watch the closest?"

There are, after all, not just position battles going on where starters graduated but spots up for grabs in the first five games due to suspensions of front-line players. So watching this one would be a bit different from usual.

In most years, the spring is about veterans smoothing out the rough edges from an off-season of inactivity and about young players attempting to turn the heads of coaches. Both of those goals were met in the scrimmage with such veterans as Dan "Boom" Herron, John Simon and Andrew Sweat frequently in the mix.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

Herron seems to have gained a bit of quickness and should be well-rested after he sits out the first five games. Simon is proving to be almost unblockable and will be one of the best defensive linemen in the country this year, and Sweat was right in the middle of things at linebacker and should provide a veteran voice to an otherwise young unit.

Most eyes in Ohio Stadium on April 23 were on the quarterbacks and with good reason. Terrelle Pryor, already sidelined this spring recovering from surgery, is one of the suspended five meaning the Buckeyes will enter the 2011 season with an untested guy taking snaps.

To my eyes, there is no real appreciable difference between vets Joe Bauserman and Kenny Guiton and neophytes Taylor Graham and Braxton Miller. None has really been through the fire in a tough game situation, and coming into the spring it was going to be tricky for the coaches to give enough looks to each guy.

Jim Tressel believes that all four had chances, and he added that he thought the tempo of the spring was excellent.

"Not just today but the totality of the spring," Tressel said. "We usually break down film on a day-to-day basis, so now it will be interesting to go back and look at the entire body of work for all four of these guys. I'm sure that all of them had some high points and all had some low points."

"Braxton played a bit more readily today than he had and that was nice to see. Joe and Kenny showed that they've been around and can manage the offense the way we need it managed. Taylor had the home-run throw and that's big. When you can make throws like that it will help the team. Taylor also probably had a few more minus yard plays, so we have to teach those young guys to get rid of the ball."

Most of the talk during the game seemed to favor Miller heading into the fall, and while I'm not quite ready to anoint him as the leader, it certainly did appear as if he and Graham were the best options during the spring game.

And for fans worried about Miller's ability to handle the offense, Tressel says not to.

"Braxton needed to learn the plays," the OSU head coach said. "Our guys know that when we play and it's time to go we'll have

the guy who can help us the most out there whether that's Braxton at quarterback or (fellow true freshman) Jeremy Cash at safety."

Miller isn't quite the electric runner Pryor is, but he keeps plays alive and showed nice poise in the pocket. He has a live arm, though I was a little surprised he didn't throw better on the move. That's something that can be gained with experience, though.

Graham plays a lot like his dad, Kent, the OSU quarterback in 1990 and '91. Neither Graham is quick-footed, but like his father, Taylor has a big arm and he showed patience and an ability to read his progressions before making throws.

It was interesting to see Tressel put the QBs into different situations – coming from the shadow of their own end zone, lining up at the opposing 25 to simulate overtime, and working on the hurry-up offense. Those are the kinds of situations that can win or lose games, and the quarterback who faces down adversity at those times will be the one who plays. It made what would have been an otherwise mundane scrimmage pretty enjoyable.

A few other players who grabbed the eye of this scribe included running back Jordan Hall, who has the best burst of his group; fellow ball carrier Rod Smith, who never went down on first contact and reminds me a lot of Raymont Harris with maybe a little more speed; Verlon Reed, who has transitioned pretty well to receiver and made a pretty grab for the offense's first touchdown; receiver T.Y. Williams, a big target who showed a willingness to go get the football; linebacker Dorian Bell, who was in the backfield almost as much as the OSU running backs; defensive end Nathan Williams, who showed good quickness off the edge and could really help Simon as he may see the occasional double-team; and freshman linebacker Joel Hale, who was a bit off the radar but was constantly around the football and has done enough this spring to be in the mix.

Things that caused concern included the pass blocking by the offensive line, though it should be noted that the unit had only eight healthy players and they had to go every snap of the scrimmage. I'm sure there were some tired legs out there although the run blocking seemed to get better as the afternoon wore on.

Other possible problem areas: receiver Corey "Philly" Brown, who looked to be pressing and dropped two easy passes early before redeeming himself with a touchdown grab; cornerback Travis Howard, a guy I've been high on due to his natural talent but who disappointed a bit by allowing a TD on the last play of the scrimmage and missing a couple of open-field tackles; and the kicking game outside of Drew Basil.

I also have to confess I was disappointed with Bauserman, who showed little zip on the football. I'm sure he's a great kid and Tressel will reward him because he's a senior, but I would have Bauserman no higher than third on the depth chart heading into the fall because he just doesn't give the OSU offense a chance to be explosive.

So now the Buckeye Nation has four months to digest it all – and surely a few will re-watch the scrimmage and attempt to parse something out of every play – before the 2011 regular season gets under way.

Is Ohio State really any better off than it was when it entered the spring?

Maybe. Despite giving up some touchdowns, the defense caused some havoc and should be fine because it always is. The offense is still largely an unknown, due mainly to the questions at quarterback and receiver.

How quickly those questions are answered – and by whom – will determine what kind of shape the Buckeyes are in when the season opens in September against Akron.

Call Him Indispensable

With spring football now in the books, it's time to turn the page and ponder the following question: Which of the suspended Buckeyes is the biggest loss?

A lot of people might chime in with Tressel and they wouldn't necessarily be wrong. The coach has been through close games and tight situations, and though many will say his offense is from the Stone Age, it can't be denied that when the stakes are highest he's made some gutsy calls. However, Luke Fickell seems to be a good coach-in-waiting and should be able to mimic the "Tressel Way" for the first five games.

A few others might say DeVier Posey since he's the only proven pass catcher on the OSU roster. Posey has had his share of drops over his career, but by the end of last season he was nearly as reliable as Dane Sanzenbacher, and his long touchdown catch in the Sugar Bowl hinted of things to come. I might say he's more valuable to the program than Tressel but there are a lot of receivers in reserve – albeit untested.

It will be interesting to see how Williams, Brown, James Louis, Chris Fields and others fare in fall camp because they will have ample opportunity to make a name for themselves.

From my perspective, the biggest loss will be Pryor.

Yes, he's still inconsistent with his throwing, and yes, he still bails on plays before he has to. But he remains the biggest game-changer on the roster, and with that element shackled for the first half of the season it will be imperative for whoever minds the store in his absence to make sure things stay intact.

Pryor is a polarizing force in the Buckeye Nation with many saying he isn't worth the trouble he's caused and others saying he gives the Buckeyes their best chance at winning.

Both factions are at least partially correct, and if the Buckeyes can somehow manage a 4-1 or (dare we say it?) a 5-0 mark through the suspensions, then watch out because no matter how good Graham or Miller are, they are merely keeping the seat warm for Pryor.

OSU's fortunes early in the year rest squarely on the quarterback position, and because the Buckeyes have absolutely no idea what's in store at that crucial spot when the season opens, it's why Pryor is the biggest loss.

First-Round Material

While Ohio State doesn't have a bevy of first-rounders as it has in past seasons, there should be one guy who hears his name called April 28 on the first night of the annual National Football League draft.

Though there has been talk that Cameron Heyward didn't help his stock by opting to wait for offseason elbow surgery, recent movement among defensive line-

men has helped Heyward move up a bit in the first round.

Early mock projections in March had Heyward falling into the second round or barely hanging on in the first. But scouts know when they pop in the tape that they're seeing a versatile guy who can play inside or outside on the defensive line, a guy who can fight through blocks with a variety of moves and a guy who will play until the whistle.

Heyward is also an opportunistic player who saves his best for the biggest stage as his Sugar Bowl performance showed (and the Rose Bowl did a year earlier). Arkansas could not block him all night, and he was a huge reason the Razorbacks offense was so inconsistent.

Heyward's skill set and attitude would seem to be a good fit for the Baltimore Ravens, and picking at 26 they would be wise to take him as current end Cory Redding is a journeyman coming off a disappointing season. If Heyward doesn't go to Baltimore, look for another blue-collar defense such as Pittsburgh or Green Bay to snatch him up at the end of the first round. The Steelers pick at No. 31 and the Super Bowl champion Packers are next at No. 32.

The next Buckeye likely to be taken is cornerback Chimdi Chekwa, who showed very well at the NFL Scouting Combine in measurables and may have helped himself.

While it's doubtful he's off the board before the third round, Chekwa could be a value for a team looking for a nickel coverage man. He's not close to a lockdown corner and gets into trouble when he peeks into the backfield, but he's a solid tackler with good instincts who can hang around the NFL for a while with his physical talent. Chekwa won't be a star, but he'll play and could be a fit for the Oakland Raiders now that Nnamdi Asomugha's contract has been voided.

Linebacker Ross Homan may not be flashy, but he does enough things well that someone will ring his phone early on the final day of the draft. He takes a good path to the football, can navigate traffic and finishes tackles. He's not the greatest athlete in the world and isn't terribly instinctive, but he's good enough to help someone – maybe a team like the Philadelphia Eagles in the fourth or fifth round.

Of course, if I had a personnel position in an NFL front office, a priority would be to grab Sanzenbacher. He'll be knocked for being on the smallest side and not super fast, but the guy can catch the football – and isn't that what a receiver is supposed to do?

It's easy to see the Great Dane giving opponents fits out of the slot. He's deceptively quick, runs great routes and will make the tough catches. It would be easy to see a receiver-starved team – are you listening, Kansas City? – snatch up Sanzenbacher in the sixth round.

Other OSU hopefuls in this year's draft are linebacker Brian Rolle, safety Jermale Hines, running back Brandon Saine, cornerback Devon Torrence and offensive guard Justin Boren. Of that group Rolle is the most likely draftee. He can be a special teams demon, which is important in today's NFL, and has the moxie to stick around and possibly contribute situationally as a linebacker for some time. The others are all good enough to get free-agent invites to training camp.

Miller's Performance Aside, Questions Still Remain

One of the leading college football analysts in the country said awhile back that for Ohio State to lose wayward quarterback Terrelle Pryor might actually be "addition by subtraction."

After monitoring the football team's spring practice and seeing what served as the annual spring game this year, I am not so sure that is the case.

Despite an eye-catching performance by freshman Braxton Miller before an announced spring game crowd of 44,276, the Buckeyes clearly have a lot of work to do at the quarterback position before they tackle the first five games of the 2011 season without their star signal caller and four other players as well as head coach Jim Tressle.

With visions of a seamless march from preseason practice to the first five games to the return of Pryor and Co., I'm sure many fans figure Miller stepped to the forefront with his play in Ohio Stadium. But it would be a bit premature to assume the freshman's performance in what was really just one of 15 practices against a mix-and-match defense has elevated Miller to the No. 1 position and eliminated any concern about the offense's most pivotal position.

The Huber Heights, Ohio, product did display the ability – both with his arm and his legs – that made him one of the nation's most highly coveted recruits as he completed 7 of 12 passes for 73 yards and a touchdown with no interceptions or sacks and ran for another 19 yards on four carries.

It's certainly not unprecedented for a freshman to start at quarterback for the Buckeyes. Pryor did it just three seasons ago and Miller has the advantage over Pryor of having gone through spring practice.

However, while Miller seemed to have a better day than fellow quarterbacks Joe Bauserman, Kenny Guiton and Taylor Graham, I fully expect this battle to continue through preseason camp and even possibly into the season. Miller has certainly established himself as a key contender, though.

Interestingly, the first things that struck me about the spring game directly affect the play of any quarterback. The offensive line began the scrimmage extremely porous in pass protection, and the OSU receivers were dropping too many passes – something that reportedly was a problem throughout the spring.

As the scrimmage progressed, however, the linemen started blocking and the receivers started catching and the offense wound up easily winning the coveted scarlet jerseys by a 59-27 count based on the modified scoring system used for the scrimmage.

The other thing that caught my eye was the play of veteran running backs Dan "Boom" Herron and Jordan Hall, both of whom looked to be in midseason form. Herron, another player who must sit out the first five games, ran for 37 yards on six carries for a 6.2-yard average. Hall also gained 37 yards, averaging 4.6 yards on eight carries with a touchdown, and he also picked up another 21 yards on a pair of receptions.

While the play of those two drew my attention, when I checked the stat sheet following the scrimmage, redshirt freshman Rod Smith was right up there as well with 36 yards on seven carries for a 5.1-yard average. With sophomore running backs Jaamal Berry and Carlos Hyde also on board, covering for Herron during the early part of the season should not be anywhere near the problem that filling Pryor's spot might be.

While the offense won the final spring

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

scrimmage handily, I tend to worry less about the defense than the offense. Since Jim Heacock was elevated to defensive coordinator in 2005, Ohio State has never finished lower than sixth in the country in scoring defense and has been in the top five in the nation in total defense four of those six seasons.

The talent appears to be there on defense – it's just a question of the defensive staff assembling the pieces between now and the Sept. 3 season opener with Akron. A strong defense coupled with a solid running game could go a long way toward covering any deficiencies the Buckeyes might have at quarterback – and receiver for that matter – in the early going.

Getting back on the practice field this spring had to be a welcome relief for the players after a winter of off-the-field distractions. With the looming suspensions of the "Tattooed Five," there was a unique environment for the Buckeyes. Not only was there the usual competition to replace departing players on the depth chart, there were added battles for playing time caused by the impending early absence of those serving the suspensions.

It was the perfect setting for a spirited spring, and reports indicate that was the case.

"Sometimes in the spring, you've got this veteran team coming back and some guy sitting in the back of the room saying, 'You know what? I'm not going to play this year anyway,' so he's not razor sharp," Tressle said. "I sensed that our guys knew that every person in that room was going to have to make a difference in 2011."

"I think they prepared that way and I think they progressed that way, and I also think they know we've got a lot of work to do but we're looking forward to it."

Herron, who has to practice knowing he is one of the players who will miss the early part of the season, agreed.

"I think everyone understands that everyone has to step up," the senior tailback said. "With the five guys missing games, someone has to step up. At every position guys are trying their best, trying to get better, trying to get on the field and trying to improve every day."

It's only a couple of months before we see if that work pays off or the season begins in chaos.

Whether the upcoming season proves successful or not remains to be seen. Regardless of the results, it should be interesting.

City League Pipeline

Every spring there are players who step out of the shadows. Some go on to earn their place on the field during game day, maybe even going on to star status. Others are simply players who have a good spring but not much more.

One player whose name was mentioned repeatedly as a standout this spring was redshirt freshman Verlon Reed, who came to Ohio State as a quarterback out of Columbus Marion-Franklin.

I think most figured Reed would wind up at another position, and the 6-0, 190-pounder seems to have settled in at wide receiver, a

position of need for the Buckeyes. He caught two passes for 25 yards and a touchdown in the spring game.

Having lived in Columbus for 35 years now, I must admit I have a soft spot for players from the Columbus City League. From Chic Harley and Bill Willis to Hop Cassady, Archie Griffin and Terry Glenn, City League players have a storied history at Ohio State.

Among noted athletes to have come out of Reed's Marion-Franklin were Buckeye basketball great and longtime NBA player Herb Williams, former Cincinnati Reds outfielder Eddie Milner and former OSU defensive back Percy King.

Like Father, Like Son

As many of you know, one of my favorite features in Buckeye Sports Bulletin is our look back into the pages of BSB from the same time in years past, generally found on page 2 of each issue. It's always fun to see how things look following the passage of time and the irony that frequently comes with the knowledge of what is going to happen following certain Buckeye events.

In this issue, it is noted that 20 years ago Kent Graham was locked in a spirited spring battle to win the starting quarterback job, just as his son Taylor is now in the mix to fill in for Pryor.

The older Graham ultimately beat out Kirk Herbstreit for the 1991 starting assignment, although Herbstreit played frequently during the season including extensive work in a 31-3 loss to Michigan and a start in the Hall of Fame Bowl against Syracuse.

For the season, Graham completed 79 of 153 passes (51.6 percent) for 1,018 yards and four touchdowns with six interceptions. Herbstreit was 38 of 75 for 485 yards (50.7) with one TD and three picks.

Herbstreit was easily the more mobile of the two, gaining 153 yards on 31 carries for a 4.9-yard average and two scores. Graham wound up with minus-27 yards on 70 carries with one score.

As something to be considered when looking ahead to the 2011 Ohio State season with the questions at quarterback, the Buckeyes compensated for the relatively weak passing attack in 1991 with a multipronged ground game.

Additionally, similar to the way OSU must play the first five games this fall without starting tailback Herron, the 1991 team was without star tailback Robert Smith who sat out the season in a dispute with offensive coordinator Elliot Uzelac over academic issues. In his place, the Buckeyes trotted out five different running backs, each of whom gained at least 281 yards and averaged at least 4.3 yards per carry.

That group included Carlos Snow (828 yards, 4.9-yard average, nine touchdowns), Butler By'not'e (648, 4.3, five), Scottie Graham (374, 5.7, five), Raymont Harris (323, 4.3, two) and Jeff Cothran (281, 6.5, two). The backs helped the Buckeyes rack up 2,615 yards on the ground that season as opposed to only 1,558 through the air.

Ohio State appears to have a similar bevy of running backs this year and has the additional advantage of Herron being available for the latter part of the season. Of course, the

Buckeyes finished 8-4 in 1991, so maybe they should continue to concentrate on developing a quarterback for the first five games of the season.

In another note from the pages of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, it was 15 years ago that Joe Germaine was first starting to make some noise at quarterback.

There was never any secret that then-quarterbacks coach Walt Harris wanted the battle for the quarterback job to be between Stan Jackson and Mark Garcia. But Germaine, who was a lightly regarded junior college transfer, simply would not go away. He went on to become one of the best passing quarterbacks in Ohio State history and helped lead the Buckeyes to an exciting Rose Bowl victory over Arizona State following the 1996 season.

Jackson and Germaine shared the quarterbacking duties in 1996 and '97 before Germaine took over by himself in 1998. Garcia lettered twice for Ohio State but never made an impact.

Germaine remains a model for players who think they are buried in the depth chart with no chance of ever playing, proving that perseverance can pay off.

Now Is The Time To Sign Up

I apologize for continually beating BSB readers over the head about our additional electronic issues, but this is a terrific new service that thousands of you are taking advantage of but thousands more are not.

With this being our last print issue of the spring, now is a great time to start enjoying this feature. While our next print issue will not be mailed until June 7, there will be electronic issues posted May 3, May 17 and May 31 and these are free with your print subscription. You will be able to keep up with all the recruiting news and any other Buckeye sports action even though BSB is on its traditional monthly summer print schedule. With the NCAA probe into the OSU football program yet to be completed, fans will want to stay connected.

Other electronic issues between now and the start of football season will be published on June 21, July 19, Aug. 2, Aug. 9 and Aug. 16. The July print edition will be mailed July 5 and our big football preview issue will be published the week of Aug. 22-26.

By not taking advantage of this added benefit to your print subscription, you are not only missing having your Buckeye sports news delivered in a more timely fashion. You are also missing many of the extra stories and features that are available only in our electronic editions.

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Many of you continue to be concerned that if you read the electronic issues, you will no longer receive your print issue of BSB. On the contrary, these are 36 additional issues, free to print subscribers and different from the newspaper. You will continue to receive your print issues of BSB in your mailbox at the regular time.

A complete schedule of this year's electronic editions, as well as sign-up instructions, can be found on page 5 of this issue. A complete schedule of print editions can be found on page 3.

If you have any question, feel free to call us at (614) 486-2202.