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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

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Take It And Run

True Freshman RB Dobbins Shines For OSU Vs. Indiana

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

In the depths of Memorial Stadium after Ohio State knocked off Indiana to open its 2017 season, head coach Urban Meyer was asked who his starting running back would be in week two. In some ways, the question was unusual.

The Buckeyes have a returning starter at running back who rushed for over 1,000 yards last season and was named the Big Ten Freshman of the Year. The thing is, Mike Weber missed the Buckeyes' 49-21 win in Bloomington, Ind., with a hamstring injury, and his replacement took the opportunity to make an immediate impression on the program record books.

So, after true freshman J.K. Dobbins carried the ball 29 times for 181 yards in place of Weber, Meyer hesitated when asked who his starter would be Sept. 9 when the No. 2 Buckeyes hold their home opener against Oklahoma.

"Uh, J.K. Weber," Meyer said, before leaning toward Dobbins, who was also seated at the dais. "Is that your last name?"

Meyer expanded on his thoughts after that, explaining that Ohio State has "two really good backs." The Buckeyes were high on Weber's progress throughout the offseason, and if not for a hamstring injury that held him out almost completely from fall camp, he likely would have started the game against the Hoosiers. But Dobbins' performance could hardly be ignored by the coaching staff or his teammates.

The first impression Dobbins left on program history came by simply stepping on the field for Ohio State's first offensive snap of the game. He was just the sixth true freshman in Ohio State football history to start the season opener, joining such players as quarterback Art Schlichter (1978), left tackle Orlando Pace (1995), linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer (1996), running back Maurice Claret (2002) and right guard Michael Jordan, who started all 13 games for the Buckeyes last season.

And after stepping on the field, Dobbins' assault on Buckeye lore continued. His 181 yards were the



PHOTOS BY SONNY BROCKWAY

STELLAR DEBUT – Freshman running back J.K. Dobbins (2) earned the praise of head coach Urban Meyer (below) by rushing for 181 yards on 29 carries in his collegiate debut against Indiana.

most by a freshman in an opener ever, surpassing the 175 yards Claret gained in a 45-21 win over Texas Tech back in '02. Those 181 yards already give Dobbins a career high better than Weber's, and they were the most by an Ohio State running back since Ezekiel Elliott rushed for 214 against Michigan in 2015.

A week earlier, Dobbins didn't even know he was going to start the game. Throughout fall camp, the word was that Weber was banged up but close to 100 percent and would be ready for the opener. It turns out he was around 80 percent and "on call" against Indiana, according to Meyer, and Dobbins said he found out he was going to start midway through the final week of the offseason.

"I just thought of it as an open opportunity for me," Dobbins said.

He took that opportunity and ran, quite literally, from the first snap of the game. Ohio State's first play from scrimmage – first-and-10 from the OSU 24-yard line – resulted in a 3-yard carry for Dobbins. Two plays later – on third-and-2 – Dobbins caught an 18-yard pass on a wheel route to keep the drive moving. He had a couple more carries before the drive stalled, leading to a Sean Nuernberger field goal.

Dobbins opened Ohio State's second drive with a 5-yard rush and tacked on a 6-yard reception and a 4-yard carry on the drive after that. Overall, it was actually a statistically slow start for the back, who averaged just 3.1 yards on seven first-quarter carries.



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COVER STORY

Dobbins Gains 107 Yards In 1st Half Vs. Hoosiers

Continued From Page 1

By halftime, that line looked completely different as Dobbins took 15 carries and 107 yards into the break.

When all was said and done, the only

thing missing from the La Grange, Texas, native's collegiate debut was a touchdown. He can probably blame his backup – sophomore Antonio Williams – for that. Williams finished the game with seven carries for 44 yards and two scores, including a 1-yard

touchdown in the first half that was partially set up by a 27-yard run from Dobbins.

All that, and it was his first college game. In fact, Dobbins hadn't played more than one snap in an official game since his junior season of high school. He broke a bone in his leg on the first play of his senior campaign before enrolling early at Ohio State and immediately impressing the coaches during spring practice.

If anyone was surprised by his performance, though, it wasn't Dobbins' teammates. It wasn't his coaches. And it certainly wasn't the player himself.

"I felt like I was going to do the things I did because I practice against the best defense in college football every day and I've got a great offensive line – Billy (Price), all the other guys around him," Dobbins said. "I kind of knew, I kind of felt like I was going to do what I did."

Meyer was equally unsurprised, even admitting that he attempted to conceal some of his high hopes for Dobbins while speaking with media members during fall camp.

"I kind of tempered my emotions with you guys early on – we've seen that with spring practice and he's had a hell of a camp," Meyer said.

One of Dobbins' teammates, wide receiver Johnnie Dixon, had a similar sentiment.

"That guy is a freak," Dixon said. "I actually worked out with him I want to say every Monday and Wednesday of the summer and I'm like, 'Man, this kid goes hard.' He's a freshman and he's already got it. A lot of kids don't really have it from day one. He had it from day one.

"Even watching in the spring, I'm like, 'This kid's amazing.' And I knew that he would get out here and do the same thing that we see in practice all the time. It was



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COVER STORY

just nobody else really knows because they don't see it, but the sky is the limit for that kid for sure."

Though Ohio State had seen what Dobbins could do in practice, offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson still admitted there was some level of concern. This is a college freshman who missed his senior season in high school, after all.

Plus, the Buckeyes' season opener was an unusual one – a prime-time matchup against a Big Ten foe on the road on a late-August Thursday. The circumstances didn't exactly scream for a huge night from a true freshman playing his first game, let alone a true freshman who wasn't even expected to start going in.

"We were just worried he was a freshman and would be too amped up," Wilson said. "He's a fired-up kid, emotional kid. Just to keep him calm, how to get him going but not let him hyperventilate early. (Running backs coach Tony Alford) talked a lot about that.

"When you got the guy and the ball and they're out there chasing you, it's prime time, it's a great atmosphere. That was a lot for a young kid, and he handled it like a champ. He's got a great future."

Now, going forward, Ohio State has what some might call a good problem.

If Weber is healthy for week two – and Meyer claimed he'd be ready to face the Sooners – then the Buckeyes have a two-pronged attack at running back going forward.

According to Wilson, that's exactly what Ohio State needs.

"He's a great kid," Wilson said of Dobbins. "He's going to work hard. Tony's going to coach him hard. We're going to get Mike back. You need more than one."

Meyer had essentially the same thought. "Mike Weber could have went tonight," Meyer said. "He's about 80 percent and he was on call. So we get Mike back next week and that's going to be a nice one-two punch, and J.K. has even got more in the tank."

Whoever does end up starting against Oklahoma, whether it be J.K. Dobbins, Mike Weber or J.K. Weber – or is it Mike Dobbins? – the Buckeyes will be comfortable handing the ball off under the Ohio Stadium lights on Sept. 9.

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OHIO STATE VS. INDIANA

Campbell Redeems Himself With 1st TD Grab

By RYAN McGLADE
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

After managing just 95 yards through the air in the first half against Indiana, Ohio State finally looked primed to complete a deep ball – an aspect of the offense that was lacking mightily a season ago – on its first possession of the second half.

GAME NOTEBOOK

Ryan McGlade

On third-and-2 from the Indiana 41-yard line, quarterback J.T. Barrett lofted a pass to Parris Campbell, who had gained some separation from his defender. On what looked to be a sure touchdown, the ball, which could not have been placed much better, slipped through Campbell's hands and fell to the turf.

K.J. Hill then tried to convert the fourth-and-short on a running play but was stuffed at the line of scrimmage. A drive that should have ended with a go-ahead touchdown ultimately resulted in a turnover on downs.

"For a split second there I kind of got down in the dumps just because those are plays I've made numerous times over and over again in practice," Campbell said. "But as soon as I got back to the sideline, I had Johnnie Dixon there, I had Terry McLaurin there, who are my best friends. They kept me up. They told me to leave it in the past, get past it and make the next play. That's kind of what my mind-set was after that. I bounced back and it felt good to do that."

Shortly after Campbell committed that mishap, ESPN cameras spotted Barrett, the first three-time captain in Ohio State's 128-year history, meeting with him on the bench.

"He just told me to keep my head," Campbell said of the advice Barrett gave him. "He said he still has confidence in me. That means a lot coming from J.T. Barrett just because of who he is. To hear that defi-



SONNY BROCKWAY

BOUNCING BACK – Junior H-back Parris Campbell (21) tallied his first touchdown catch against Indiana after dropping a sure score earlier in the game.

nately got me back on my high horse and I was ready to go."

Following Campbell's drop, the Ohio State defense forced a three-and-out on Indiana's ensuing possession, giving the ball back to the offense on its own 15. Following two rushes from running back J.K. Dobbins and one from Barrett, the Ohio State coaching staff dialed up Campbell's number again. Barrett hit the H-back on a crossing route, and the Akron native turned upfield for a 28-yard gain, a key play during the Buckeyes' 85-yard touchdown drive to give them a 20-14 lead midway through the third.

"It was a great feeling," Campbell said of the team going right back to him after dropping that would-be touchdown on the previous series, "because J.T. still had confidence in me, my coaches still had confidence in me to make those play calls, even after that (dropped pass) just because they knew I would bounce back. It's just something you've got to let go. When you have guys like

that on the sideline – in your ear, keeping you up – it's easy to bounce back."

The Hoosiers answered Ohio State's scoring march with a touchdown of their own to regain a one-point lead with less than 20 minutes to play. That advantage didn't last long because Ohio State needed only one play to go on top for good, all thanks to none other than Campbell.

Barrett found Campbell on another crossing pattern just 2 yards past the line of scrimmage. Known for his speed, the fourth-year junior blew past three Indiana defenders and found himself in the end zone 74 yards later.

"As soon as I caught the ball I turned upfield and just saw 83 right there, Terry McLaurin," said Campbell, who registered his first career touchdown reception with that catch and run helped by a McLaurin block. "That's a guy who blocks his (tail) off every single play no matter what it is. So as soon as I saw him, I knew it was six. As soon as I got past him, it was green field from there."

Ohio State offensive coordinator and former Indiana head coach Kevin Wilson said the staff's confidence in Campbell's didn't waver after that drop.

"He has played a lot of ball," Wilson said. "To really succeed, you have to get out in front of people and fail, and not be afraid to fail. When you are a great player like Parris, you flush (the drop), put it behind you, and move on. It was good to see him do that, and it is not a surprise. It's a good lesson for our young players moving forward."

Campbell finished the evening with a team-high six catches and team-best 136 receiving yards, in addition to the score. He also had one carry for 6 yards from his H-back position. Barrett, who went 20 of 35 passing for 304 yards and three touchdowns, said he didn't fault Campbell after the missed opportunity, realizing that there will be times when he takes the blame.

"I think that is part of the game," Barrett said of Campbell's drop. "There are going to be times where I am going to miss him. We just have to rally back, and I think he did a great job."

Dixon Registers 1st TD Reception

Campbell wasn't the only the Ohio State wideout to notch his first career touch-

down grab against the Hoosiers. In the third quarter, Dixon – another fourth-year junior – found pay dirt after a catch for the first time as a Buckeye with a 59-yard scoring reception.

The moment was a long time coming for the West Palm Beach, Fla., native. He had been battling knee issues since 2014, which had limited him to appearances in just 14 games prior to the meeting with Indiana.

Ironically enough, Campbell's and Dixon's touchdowns occurred on consecutive possessions.

"As soon as (Dixon) scored, I walked up to him and I said, 'Back-to-back, that's what we've got to do moving forward,'" Campbell said. "It was a great moment to see him get in the end zone because of everything that he's been through leading up to this point. So, it was definitely a good feeling."

Much like Campbell's score, Dixon pulled away from defenders chasing him by using his speed, something that caught head coach Urban Meyer's attention.

"I kind of knew (of Dixon's speed) because of spring (practice), but for three years we didn't know it," Meyer said. "But he's healthy, his mind is great, he's selfless right now, also blocked very well. It's great to see that. That's one of the great stories in college football right now."

The duo of Campbell and Dixon accounted for the Buckeyes' two longest plays from scrimmage on the night as well. While the two showed some flashes of downfield offense for Ohio State, Wilson does not believe they solidified themselves as the long-ball hitters on the team yet.

"I think we've got to really continue to look to be more balanced and more efficient," Wilson said. "We left some things on the field, we dropped one (in the end zone), we dropped one (on the sideline). We had a couple drives going, we had a couple times we miscalculated on third down and maybe ran the play into a loaded deck."

Campbell was also asked if his and Dixon's performances in Bloomington cemented them as the downfield threats for the squad.

"I would say yes and no because we have so many more guys in our unit who can do the exact same things that we did today," Campbell responded. "It's just a matter of when you get the opportunity and what you're going to do with it. From A to Z in our unit, everybody can make those plays."

First-Half Pass Defense 'Awful'

With former Ohio State cornerbacks Gareon Conley and Marshon Lattimore and safety Malik Hooker all taken in the first round of the NFL draft in April, it was safe to say the largest question mark looming for the Ohio State defense heading into the 2017 season was the secondary.

The only returning starter – technically – was senior safety Damon Webb. In the program's eyes, junior cornerback Denzel Ward is considered a returning first-stringer after lining up on defense for 468 snaps in 2016, even though he was not on the field for the first play in any of the Buckeyes' games last fall.

Against Indiana, in addition to Ward and Webb, sophomore cornerback Kendall Sheffield, who transferred to Ohio State in the offseason from Blinn College in Brenham, Texas, sophomore corner Damon Arnette and safeties Erick Smith and Jordan Fuller were tasked with filling the void left

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OHIO STATE VS. INDIANA

by Conley, Hooker and Lattimore. Though Fuller recorded his first career interception in the second quarter after a Sheffield tip and Ward had five pass breakups by halftime, the revamped OSU defensive backfield was gashed frequently throughout the first half.

In the first 30 minutes alone, the Hoosiers threw for 284 yards, which were more passing yards than any opposing team had in an entire game against Ohio State last season. Even in the College Football Playoff against eventual 2016 national champion Clemson and quarterback Deshaun Watson, who was a Heisman finalist, Ohio State held the Tigers to 265 passing yards for the whole game.

Indiana quarterback Richard Lagow completed 63.2 percent of his passes (24 of 38) in the first two quarters. He had a pair of 28-yard tosses – one to Simmie Cobbs and the other to Donovan Hale – to go along with an 18-yard scoring strike to Ian Thomas in the opening two periods as well.

“Our defense was exposed big time in the first half,” Meyer said in his postgame press conference. “The pass defense was awful. It wasn’t complicated, (Indiana was) just picking on corners, so the corners have got to step up. We see what’s coming in about eight days, nine days, whenever that is – Oklahoma (on Sept. 9). If we don’t get that right, it’s a problem.”

Ohio State fared better in the second half, as the Hoosiers were limited to 136 yards through the air in the final two quarters. Like Fuller, Ward recorded his first interception of his career when he picked off Lagow in the fourth.

Barrett Breaks Another Record

With a 5-yard pass completion to Hill on the second play from scrimmage in the first quarter, Barrett broke Ohio State’s all-

time record for total offense, passing former quarterback Art Schlichter with 8,851 yards. Barrett finished the evening with 61 rushing yards and 304 passing yards to now account for 9,086 yards of total offense during his career as a Buckeye.

Barrett has set 24 Ohio State records. The Wichita Falls, Texas, native’s three touchdown passes and one touchdown run against IU bring him just two touchdowns shy of tying Drew Brees’ Big Ten record of 106 TDs responsible for set from 1997-2000.

Dobbins, Williams Excel In Weber’s Absence

With Mike Weber sidelined because of a hamstring injury, everyone moved up a spot on the running back depth chart. The tailback who benefited the most from Weber’s absence was true freshman J.K. Dobbins, who became only the sixth true freshman to start in the first game of the season. The others are Schlichter in 1978, left tackle Orlando Pace in 1995, linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer in 1996, running back Maurice Claret in 2002 and right guard Michael Jordan in 2016.

In his first game as a Buckeye, Dobbins set a school record with 181 yards on the ground, eclipsing the previous freshman mark in an opener of 175 yards set by Claret in a 45-21 win over Texas Tech in 2002. Dobbins even caught two passes for another 24 yards, finishing with 205 yards of offense. Unfortunately for Dobbins, the La Grange, Texas, product will have to wait another day to score his first career touchdown, as he did not find the end zone once against the Hoosiers.

A fellow running back who did notch his first and second career rushing touchdowns was Antonio Williams. In fact, the sophomore scored Ohio State’s first touchdown of

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

The rushing attack. Led by an electric debut from J.K. Dobbins, Ohio State amassed 292 yards and three touchdowns on 51 carries. Dobbins did not disappoint in his first start as a Buckeye, with the true freshman’s 29 carries for 181 yards doing more for the OSU offense than the stat sheet shows. Eventually, the steady dose of the former Scout 100 four-star running back allowed J.T. Barrett to settle in after a slow start, and the fifth-year senior quarterback broke through in the second half. Barrett added 61 yards on 13 carries, taking a five-wide quarterback draw and plunging 2 yards into the end zone midway through the third quarter for his first rushing touchdown of the season. As the run game continued to grind it out, Ohio State’s offense came to life as Barrett added three more touchdowns through the air.

What Didn’t Work

The pass defense. With three new starters in the secondary, the unproven unit was one of the biggest question marks entering the season, and Indiana’s pass-heavy attack tested it immediately. Richard Lagow had his way with Ohio State’s defensive backs early on, amassing 410 yards and three touchdowns on a 40-for-65 clip. The Buckeyes did catch the Hoosiers quarterback with two interceptions – first a touchdown-saving tip drill from sophomore safety Jordan Fuller in the first half before junior cornerback Denzel Ward capped his solid performance with one early in the fourth quarter. However, the fact that Lagow’s eclipsing 400 yards did not come back to bite OSU is because of Indiana’s one-dimensional approach. Had the Buckeyes not held the Hoosiers to 17 yards on 27 carries, this could have been a much tighter finish down the stretch.

Play Of The Game

Parris Campbell’s redemption. After the junior H-Back dropped what would have been a 41-yard touchdown pass from Barrett on third down early in the third quarter, leading to a turnover on downs the very next play, Campbell came up big two possessions later. The 6-1, 208-pounder took a drag underneath and turned on the jets for a game-changing, 74-yard catch-and-run to give the Buckeyes a lead they would not relinquish. Campbell, who hauled in a team-high six catches for 136 yards, completely shifted the momentum back to Ohio State for good with his timely explosion. The Buckeyes ended the game with 29 unanswered points in the final 19:38 of regulation.

– Garrett Stepien

the season when he carried the ball in from a yard out with 5:17 left until halftime to make it a 14-13 game in favor of Indiana.

Williams ended the night with 44 yards on seven totes to go along with his pair of scores.

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OHIO STATE VS. INDIANA

Barrett, Dobbins Lead OSU Past Indiana, 49-21

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

For the first 30 minutes of the season and Big Ten opener for both teams on Aug. 31, the Indiana Hoosiers executed the type of up-tempo offense that Ohio State had been working on all offseason.

Guided by senior quarterback Richard Lagow, the Hoosiers were snapping the ball about every 15 seconds and utilizing a corps of talented receivers against a secondary that had to replace three first-round picks in the NFL draft in April.

Trailing 14-13 at the half, the OSU defense stiffened, and its offense – although not clicking on all cylinders – passed its initial test. More precisely, those initials belonged to fifth-year senior quarterback J.T. Barrett and freshman running back J.K. Dobbins.

Barrett passed for three touchdowns, ran for one and added a two-point conversion, and Dobbins had a record-setting debut as

No. 2 Ohio State rallied to a 49-21 win at Memorial Stadium in Bloomington, Ind.

The Buckeyes were down 21-20 in the third quarter before Barrett hit Parris Campbell and Johnnie Dixon for long TDs to start a string of 29 straight points

Barrett was 20 of 35 for 304 yards and had 13 rushes for 61 yards. Dobbins, starting for the injured Mike Weber (hamstring), had 29 carries for 181 yards, breaking the OSU freshman first-game rushing record of 175 by Maurice Claret v. Texas Tech in 2002. Also, sophomore back Antonio Williams rushed for the first two TDs of his OSU career.

Lagow was 40 for 65 for 410 yards with three touchdowns and two interceptions. Simmie Cobbs Jr. had 11 catches for 149 yards and a TD for the Hoosiers.

While the Hoosiers totaled 437 yards, only 151 came in the second half and the Buckeyes' stout defensive line limited them to just 17 yards rushing on 27 carries for the game.



SONNY BROCKWAY

WINNING EFFORT – Fifth-year senior quarterback J.T. Barrett accounted for four total touchdowns in Ohio State's 49-21 win over Indiana.

"Talking to their guys, they think they've got five first-round draft picks over there, eventually," said Indiana first-year coach Tom Allen. "That's not normal. They are pretty elite up front, for sure."

Junior college transfer Kendall Sheffield led OSU with seven tackles (six solo), and Tyquan Lewis had two of the five sacks of Lagow.

OSU had 596 total yards, 292 on the ground. IU ran 95 plays compared to 86 for the Buckeyes.

"I thought we operated in the second half

faster," said Barrett, who on a pass to K.J. Hill on the second play from scrimmage in the game broke Ohio State's all-time record for total offense, surpassing Art Schlichter's 8,851 yards.

How It Happened

The sellout crowd of 52,929, the fourth highest in school history, sensed a historic upset when Indiana took the halftime lead on the arm of Lagow and the quick-snap offense that ran 58 plays and accumulated 286 yards, all but two through the air, before the break.

Lagow tossed two TDs while the Buckeyes had to settle for two Sean Nuernberger field goals before Williams' 1-yard run pulled OSU to within one with just over five minutes left in the second quarter.

"Our defense was exposed big time in the first half, our pass defense was awful," Ohio State coach Urban Meyer said. "It was not complicated. They were just picking on the corners."

Barrett on the opening drive of the game hit Dobbins for 18 yards on a third-and-2, connected with Campbell for 17 in a third-and-5 situation and added a 15-yarder to Marcus Baugh on the next play before OSU stalled at the Indiana 10. Nuernberger's 27-yard field goal at the 10:27 mark was his first since the 2015 season to complete the 11-play, 66-yard series that took 4:33.

Indiana quickly went downfield for a 7-3 lead with 7:50 to go in the first, moving 87 yards in 11 plays in only 2:37. Lagow connected with Cobbs three times for 49 yards to set up an 18-yard scoring strike to Ian Thomas. He was initially ruled to be out of bounds, but the call was reversed after a video review.

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OHIO STATE VS. INDIANA

The game settled down and OSU burned two timeouts on its next four possessions, all of which ended with punts by redshirt freshman Drue Chrisman.

OSU got the game's first turnover early in the second quarter when Lagow, facing a second-and-5 from the OSU 14, had his pass tipped by Sheffield and intercepted by Jordan Fuller. He returned it 40 yards to the Ohio State 40.

The Buckeyes eventually drove to the IU 2 on a Barrett third-down run of 8 yards but settled for a Nuernberger 19-yard FG with 10:15 left in the second quarter to make it 7-6.

Indiana responded with an 80-yard march in 10 plays over a 2:03 span to take a 14-6 advantage. Cobbs caught three more passes for 45 yards, the last an 8-yard TD reception with 8:12 remaining before the half.

The Buckeyes turned to Dobbins on the next drive, and he didn't disappoint. Among his four carries for 43 yards during the drive was a 27-yard run to the Indiana 9. Barrett then ran to the 1 and Williams scored from there to make it 14-13 with 5:17 left before the half.

OSU had a chance to grab the lead early in the third quarter, but Campbell was alone in the end zone and dropped what would have been a 41-yard TD. He made amends on the next drive with a 28-yard reception that led to Barrett's 2-yard run for a 20-14 lead with 6:57 left in the quarter. The drive went 85-yards in 13 plays and gobbled up 4:19.

An overturned call helped IU go ahead 21-20 with 4:56 left in the third. Lagow was being pulled down by Chris Worley when the ball popped free. That's when defensive tackle Robert Landers, scooped up the ball at

the IU 35 and used all 283 pounds to rumble into the end zone.

However, the play was ruled an incomplete pass after a review, and Lagow quickly went to Cobbs for 17 yards. Cobbs had a couple more catches, but it was Lagow to Thomas from 2 yards for the score.

Campbell then took over on the Buckeyes' first play. He was in a crossing pattern when he caught the ball at the 28 and sprinted down the left sideline in a scoring play that used up 18 seconds.

"After that drop, my teammates got around me," said Campbell, who had six catches for a career-high 136 yards plus 50 yards on two kick returns. "They kept hitting me with positive notes."

His burst gave the Buckeyes a 27-21 lead with 4:38 left in the third.

After an IU punt, Dixon, the oft-injured junior receiver, went 59 yards, grabbing the pass from Barrett at the Indiana 49 and blowing by everybody for his first career TD reception with 1:47 left in the third. Barrett added a two-point conversion for a 35-21 lead.

OSU removed all doubt at the 12:12 mark of the fourth quarter when Barrett hit Binjimen Victor for 11 yards and a 42-21 lead one play after Jashon Cornell stripped Lagow of the ball and Jonathon Cooper recovered.

Another turnover led to the next score. Denzel Ward intercepted Lagow at the OSU 13, and Williams capped a 13-play, 87-yard drive with a 5-yard run with 3:55 left for a 49-21 lead.

"We just played a great football team," Hoosier coach Allen said. "There's no other way to put it. I coached in the SEC and that's the kind of team we used to play about every week."

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Feb. 21	Oct. 13
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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 49, Indiana 21

Indiana head coach Tom Allen on not being able to run the ball, throwing 65 times and how good Ohio State's defensive line is: "Talking to their guys, they think they got five first-round draft picks over there, eventually. That's not normal. They are pretty elite up front, for sure. Made it tough. Yeah, you've got to run the football and obviously we didn't want to throw it that many times, but at the same time, it's kind of what they forced us to do. I think that we know we have to run the football, and that's going to be a huge priority for us. But it was – there wasn't the same matchups up front that you like to have each week. But they are a great football team."

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on how freshman J.K. Dobbins compares to former Buckeye running back Ezekiel Elliott: "He's close. He's very similar to Zeke. He's very similar about the way he works. He handles his business like a pro. He walked in as a grown man, and we're happy to have him."

Meyer on his message to the team at half-time: "I was a little bit – I was going to say pissed, but I try to stay clean here. Yes, pissed. They understand they didn't play very well. But I didn't see any panic. I thought the offensive coaches did a nice job in their conversations and the same with the defense. They played much better through the third quarter. To say we didn't expect the first 30 minutes to be a street fight, that's not true. We expected it to be what it was. If we play a little better, hit a couple of those deep balls early in the game, maybe score a couple touchdowns – I think we only had two field goals – and then our corners just play a little better. We expected it to be a tough game."

OSU fifth-year senior quarterback J.T. Barrett on how different the new offense felt being in a game: "I'd probably say I thought we operated in the second half faster. You see the defensive guys not being able to get set. So I think our operation then was faster. Just older, experienced guys – whether it be receivers, O-linemen,

tight end – so I think the conversation is better on the sidelines as far as adjustments because guys know what they're looking for. So the conversation, it's easier to come out of a person's mouth if they know what they're talking about, so I think that was good. Especially when it got to halftime and we were able to talk it through and really voice what was happening out there from receivers, tight ends, O-line."

Dobbins on the in-game support from OSU sophomore running back Mike Weber: "He is an encouraging guy. You know he's like my older brother. During the course of the game he was just telling me to keep running the ball, keep running the ball. I felt like it was pretty rough, so we just kept running it and he kept encouraging me."

OSU offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson on being back at Indiana: "It was difficult. I mean, we worked hard to keep our focus on the job and it was good. We knew it would be a tough job. They did a great job defensively early with some things and different looks, and we had to adjust so I think the ability to stay calm. But it was a good win, tough to be back here. I love those kids, but also I love (the Ohio State) locker room. That's a lot of fun and I'm looking forward to this new challenge."

OSU junior H-back Parris Campbell on Wilson's style as offensive coordinator: "One word I would use is swag. He has so much swag. He may not seem that way, but he has so much swagger. On the field with us, he's really confident. He talks a lot of stuff and he's going to back it up, and we back it up for him. He just has so much confidence."

OSU sophomore right guard Branden Bowen on what clicked for him in camp that allowed him to get to this point as a starter: "That 'click' factor that everyone talks about, I think it was just the love of my brothers. After this winter, I kind of just sat down and looked around and I've got to do it for those guys – I've got to do it for Billy (Price), I've got to do it for

Jamarco (Jones), this is their last shot. I've got to do it for Isaiah (Prince) and I've got to do it for Mike (Jordan). It was really sitting back and seeing the seniors and how much work they've put in and how much they've invested in this school, and just doing it for them."

Bowen on blocking for/watching Dobbins: "It's amazing blocking for him because you know if he gets the smallest crease, he's gone. He's going to take full advantage of every hole we open, and he's going to score some touchdowns this year."

Price on Campbell bouncing back with a touchdown after a dropped touchdown pass: "I think Parris has grown a lot. I'm very happy he's on my side because that bubble pass, I didn't think he was going to make it and then he scoots one tackle and he's out. So, he's a dynamic player, he's explosive. We give a lot of credit to (wide receivers coach Zach) Smith in that room and, again, got to give a lot of credit to Parris himself because, again, you see that maturity over the years. He dropped a pass earlier, but you know what, he made up for it in other aspects. So, again, having that short memory, turning things around, you just go out there and execute the next play."

OSU fifth-year senior linebacker Chris Worley on facing Indiana's pass-heavy offense: "It honestly wasn't anything that we didn't expect. It was a bunch of quick throws and taking a shot over the top because we knew that they couldn't block our defensive line. Every time he held it he got hit. There was a lot of great coverage – there were just better catches. We knew that they were going to live by that and they were going to die by that."

OSU fifth-year senior defensive end Tyquan Lewis on what changed against Indiana's offense in the second half: "We just went in and made a few adjustments, knew that the tempo was coming. We didn't really panic, there was no such thing as panic in the locker room. Just came back out in the second half, played a little harder, just kept doing what we do and plugged away."



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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 49, Indiana 21

Aug. 31, 2017 – Memorial Stadium; Bloomington, Ind.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
Ohio State	3	10	22	14	49
Indiana	7	7	7	0	21

First Quarter

OSU – Nuernberger, 27 yard field goal, 10:27; 11 plays, 66 yards, 4:33 TOP.
IU – Thomas, 18 yard pass from Lagow (Oakes kick), 7:50; 11 plays, 87 yards, 2:37 TOP.

Second Quarter

OSU – Nuernberger, 19 yard field goal, 10:15; 5 plays, 58 yards, 1:11 TOP.
IU – Cobbs, 8 yard pass from Lagow (Oakes kick), 8:12; 10 plays, 80 yards, 2:03 TOP.
OSU – Williams, 1 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 5:17; 9 plays, 75 yards, 2:55 TOP.

Third Quarter

OSU – Barrett, 2 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 6:57; 13 plays, 85 yards, 4:19 TOP.
IU – Thomas, 2 yard pass from Lagow (Oakes kick), 4:56; 9 plays, 62 yards, 2:01 TOP.
OSU – Campbell, 74 yard pass from Barrett (Nuernberger kick), 4:38; 1 play, 74 yards, 0:18 TOP.
OSU – Dixon, 59 yard pass from Barrett (Barrett rush for 2-point conversion), 1:47; 5 plays, 75 yards, 1:53 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Victor, 11 yard pass from Barrett (Nuernberger kick), 12:08; 1 play, 11 yards, 0:04 TOP.
OSU – Williams, 5 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 3:55; 13 plays, 87 yards, 6:16 TOP.
Att. – 52,929.

Weather – 76 degrees, partly cloudy; wind, NE 9 mph.

Team Statistics

	OSU	IU
First Downs	26	25
Rushing	14	1
Passing	10	22
Penalty	2	2
Rushing-Yards	51-292	27-17
Passing Yards	304	420
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	20-35-0	42-68-2
Offensive Plays	86	95
Total Net Yards	596	437
Third Down Efficiency	8-19	9-20
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-3	1-1
Punts-Avg.	6-45.3	9-41.0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties	5-50	5-33
Time of Possession	31:50	28:10

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **OSU:** Dobbins 29-181; Barrett 13-61; Williams 7-44; Campbell 1-6; K. Hill 1-0. **IU:** Ellison 7-24; Ramsey 3-10; Majette 7-6; Gest 2-5; Williams 1-2; Lagow 7-(-30).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **OSU:** Barrett 20-35-0-304-3. **IU:** Lagow 40-65-2-410-3; Ramsey 2-3-0-10-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Campbell 6-136; Dixon 2-65; Dobbins 2-24; McLaurin 2-21; Baugh 2-16; K. Hill 2-6; Farrell 1-14; Victor 1-11; Mack 1-6; Williams 1-5. **IU:** Cobbs 11-149; Timian 10-72; Hale 5-67; Thomas 5-53; Majette 4-22; Watercutter 2-23; Gest 2-12; Mack 1-14; Harris 1-4; Ellison 1-4.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **OSU:** Chrisman 6-45.3-62. **IU:** Whitehead 9-41.0-49.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** K. Hill 2-7. **IU:** None.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Campbell 2-50. **IU:** Williams 8-128.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – **OSU:** None. **IU:** None.

FORCED FUMBLES – **OSU:** Cornell. **IU:** None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Cooper 1-0. **IU:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Fuller 1-40; Ward 1-0. **IU:** None.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Lewis 2.0-13; Cornell 1.0-9; Bosa 1.0-5; Hubbard 1.0-2. **IU:** McCray III 1.0-7.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Lewis 2.0-13; Cornell 1.0-9; D. Jones 1.0-5; Bosa 1.0-5; Hubbard 1.0-2; Arnette 1.0-1; Worley 1.0-1; Sprinkle 1.0-1. **IU:** McCray III 1.0-7; Hoff 1.0-1; Minor 0.5-1; Ball 0.5-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – **OSU:** Sheffield 6-1-7; Arnette 6-0-6; Webb 5-1-6; Fuller 5-0-5; Worley 4-2-6; E. Smith 4-1-5; Booker 4-0-4; Ward 4-0-4; Lewis 3-0-3; Holmes 3-0-3; Hubbard 3-0-3; Baker 3-0-3; Harrison 2-1-3; Riep 2-0-2; K. Jones 2-0-2; Cornell 2-0-2; Sprinkle 1-1-2; Hamilton 1-1-2; Turnure 1-1-2; Browning 1-1-2; Mack 1-0-1; D. Jones 1-0-1; Bosa 1-0-1; Cooper 1-0-1; Young 0-1-1; Hilliard 0-1-1. **IU:** Scales 9-3-12; Ball 8-3-11; Covington 5-2-7; Fields 5-0-5; Dutra 4-1-5; McCray III 3-1-4; Riggins 3-0-3; Layne 3-0-3; Fant 3-0-3; Minor 2-1-3; Barwick Jr. 2-1-3; Stallings IV 1-2-3; Crawford 1-2-3; Gooch 2-0-2; Willis 2-0-2; Brown 2-0-2; Bach 1-0-1; Hoff 1-0-1; Wilson 1-0-1; Walton 1-0-1; Cronk 1-0-1; Williams 1-0-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **OHIO STATE:** Offense, J. Jones, Jordan, Price, Bowen, Prince, Barrett, Dobbins, Campbell, K. Hill, Mack, McLaurin, Nuernberger. Defense, Lewis, Bosa, D. Jones, Hubbard, Holmes, Worley, Baker, Ward, Webb, Fuller, Arnette, Chrisman. Reserves, Okudah, Cornell, Young, Dixon, Riep, K. Jones, Goins, Browning, Sheffield, Victor, Cooper, Wint, Williams, McCall, Borland, Booker, E. Smith, Turnure, Harrison, Hilliard, McCullough, Hamilton, Pridgeon, Landers, Burrell, Saunders, Baugh, Farrell, Garrett, Sprinkle, Haubeil.

INDIANA: Offense, Cronk, Martin, Littlejohn, Stepaniak, Baker, Cobbs, Timian, Hale, Lagow, Majette, Thomas, Oakes. Defense, Gooch, Robinson, Hoff, Wilson, Covington, Scales, Fant, Ball, Crawford, Dutra, Brown, Whitehead. Reserves, Williams, Ramsey, Gajcak, Green, Albomonte, Harris, Walker, Mack, Thompson, James, Westbrook, Lane, Bach, Fields, Gest, Rodriguez, Walton, Ellison, Riggins, Bryant, Natee, Brookins, Conrad, Arnold, Jones, Willis, McCray III, Barwick Jr., Love, Crider, Dorris, Watercutter, Hendershot, Harris, Minor, Godsil, Stallings IV.

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Despite Gaudy Stats, Offense Still Has Question Marks

For those of you like me who were anxious for the start of the Kevin Wilson/Ryan Day era for the Ohio State offense – which includes nearly every Buckeye fan – there are mixed data and results to analyze after the Buckeyes' opener against Indiana. The bottom line for the offense was 49 points and 596 total yards on a balanced 292 yards rushing and 304 yards passing against a solid Big Ten East competitor. Those are good numbers in anyone's book, especially when you consider they were accompanied by zero turnovers.

But the road to those numbers was a winding one, and the performance of the Buckeye offense probably left as many questions as answers – not necessarily surprising for an opener against a stronger opponent than is often seen in a first game.

I was certainly impressed when the Buckeyes came out like gangbusters on the game's initial drive. Buckeye fans and, more importantly, veteran quarterback J.T. Barrett saw something they hadn't seen in a long time – open receivers – and Barrett took advantage of the situation, hitting four different players for four consecutive completions and 55 yards as Ohio State quickly moved to the IU 13. The drive stalled from there, and OSU had to settle for a 27-yard Sean Nuernberger field goal.

I didn't think much of settling for a field goal at the time. The way the Buckeyes looked with the passing game coming out of the gate, I thought that was just the first three of what would be many points on the night – which ultimately proved to be true.

But after those impressive first plays, the Buckeyes – especially Barrett – seemed to revert to their 2016 identity with tightly covered receivers, inconsistent passing by the oft-criticized QB, inconsistent blocking by the offensive line and a general air of confusion and ineptitude by the offense. It was as if deposed coaches Ed Warinner and Tim Beck had somehow sneaked back into the press box.

Completely absent was the much ballyhooed and anticipated “tempo” as promised by head coach Urban Meyer, Wilson and Day. Indiana, meanwhile, was putting on a clinic in tempo, keeping the highly touted Ohio State defense on its heels. If you blinked you'd miss an IU play, they were coming so fast. The Hoosiers were able to take a 14-13 lead into the half, and it could have been worse for the Buckeyes.

IU held the edge in total yards, 286-216, and passing yards, 284-95. Barrett was a dismal 10 of 21 passing for just 95 yards with more than half of those yards coming on that opening drive.

Buckeye fans had to have gotten a little fidgety when Ohio State wasted a 24-yard run by freshman J.K. Dobbins and turned the ball over on downs at the IU 41 on their first drive of the second half after K.J. Hill was stopped for no gain on a fourth-and-2.

But even in its failure that drive may have proved a turning point.

I felt one of the keys to the ultimate offensive turnaround was the fact that Barrett carried the ball twice on that drive, gaining 5 and 8 yards, the start of a 61-yard rushing game by the senior. Despite all the spotlight on the OSU passing game lately, for the Ohio State offense to be truly effective, Barrett has to both pass and run, just as he did in the magical 2014 championship season, when he rushed for 938 yards and threw for another 2,834 on 64.6 percent passing, averaging 314.3 total yards a game.

The introduction of Barrett's rushing seemed to help finally open the passing game back up. Parris Campbell got open but was

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

unable to corral a high pass from Barrett – high but a pass that should have been caught by a big-time college receiver. A play later, Barrett – the quarterback allegedly who can't throw the long pass – fired a picture-perfect 41-yard bomb to Campbell, and the ball inexplicably went right through his hands.

Yes, the drive stalled, but Ohio State ran the ball three times on the drive and averaged over 12 yards a carry and Campbell was open again. Was the offensive tide turning?

The defense then held the Hoosiers to a three-and-out, and the Buckeyes marched 85 yards in 13 plays, with Barrett going in from the 2 to give Ohio State its first lead since the 7:50 mark of the first quarter, 20-14. Campbell partially atoned for his sins of the previous drive with a 28-yard reception, and Barrett carried three times for 21 yards including the scoring run.

After that, it was off to the races for the Buckeyes – literally. Campbell and Johnnie Dixon both took off with short passes that turned into long touchdowns – Campbell for 74 yards and Dixon for 59. Binjamin Victor added an athletic 11-yard TD reception, and the Buckeyes won a game that had been so tight going away, 49-21.

Meyer loves to get speedy athletes into space and have them do their thing. For the last couple of seasons, Ohio State fans have been waiting for the fleet, athletic group of receivers whom the coach and his staff have brought in recently to do something – anything. It has been a long wait, but maybe the receivers have finally come of age, as evidenced by the plays from Campbell, Dixon and Victor.

As an aside, in the nearly 40 years I have been covering Ohio State football and through multiple coaches, OSU has always featured excellent blocking from its wide receivers. The game with Indiana showed that this season will probably be no different. Terry McLaurin helped spring Campbell on his long catch and run, and Victor did the same for Dixon.

Now if Barrett can continue to throw those nice long ones like the missed opportunity to Campbell and his receivers can hold onto them, Ohio State might really be onto something. And maybe it has something to do with the coaching of Wilson and Day.

Dobbins Doesn't Disappoint

Throughout spring and fall camp, the reports on Dobbins were beyond glowing. With last year's Big Ten Freshman of the Year, Mike Weber, nursing a hamstring injury, Dobbins got the start against IU over sophomores Antonio Williams and Demario McCall. With all the Dobbins hype, I have to admit that I was a little disappointed with his start to the game.

True he had an 18-yard reception on Ohio State's first possession of the game, but that seemed to be as much because he was open on a well-conceived play and Barrett hit him in stride as anything that made him stand out. On the ground, his primary responsibility, he gained just 9 yards on this first four carries and finished the first quarter with 22 yards on seven totes for a 3.1 yard average and a long of 5. The Buckeyes trailed, 7-3. He carried two more times for 4 yards on the Buckeyes' first

drive of the second quarter, a three-and-out, and I was hardly impressed.

On the Buckeyes' next drive, however, he ripped off a 35-yard gain to help set up a Nuernberger field goal to pull Ohio State within one, and the 5-10, 208-pounder out of La Grange, Texas, never looked back. Starting with that run, Dobbins carried 20 times for 155 yards for a 7.8 yard average and won me over, finishing with a record 181 yards for an OSU freshman in an opener on 29 carries. He added a pair of receptions for 24 yards for good measure, and most importantly of all, he had those 31 touches with no fumbles!

He leaves Meyer with the seeming dilemma of what to do with a pair of stud tailbacks, “J.K. Weber,” as he called them in combination. That's not a dilemma at all. When it comes to tailbacks, you want a pair and a spare, and a little competition will only make Dobbins and Weber that much better.

Was It That Bad?

I know that the Hoosiers passed for an unacceptable 420 yards against Ohio State. But somehow I didn't find the performance of the Buckeye secondary as bad as Meyer seemed to.

“The pass defense was awful,” Meyer said. “It wasn't complicated, (Indiana was) just picking on corners, so the corners have got to step up. We see what's coming in about eight days, nine days, whenever that is – Oklahoma. If we don't get that right, it's a problem.”

The Ohio State defense clearly struggled with the incredible tempo of the Hoosiers, and I also thought that IU signal caller Richard Lagow completed many passes that were well defended by the Buckeyes. It made me think about what OSU quarterbacks coach Day has been preaching to Barrett – throw the ball to your receivers, even if they are covered, and let them make a play.

Far be it from me to challenge Meyer's assessment. He has three more rings than I do. But I did feel a little better when longtime coach Bill Conley, in his column on page 37 of this issue, seemed to agree with me – that things may not have been as bad as they seemed.

“It was more a matter of pinpoint passes and some acrobatic receptions than it was poor coverage that enabled Lagow to march the Hoosiers down the field via the air attack with an 11- then a 10-play drive to take a 14-6 lead in the second quarter,” Conley said of the IU passing. “Cornerbacks Damon Arnette and Kendall Sheffield got their initiation under fire but showed they can press and run with talented receivers. As the pressure on Lagow heated up and with some safety-over-the-top help, the entire secondary grew and became more confident.”

After yielding 25 completions and 284 yards passing in the first half, Ohio State yielded just 136 yards on 15 completions in the second half.

Oklahoma and Baker Mayfield will provide an even tougher test for the Buckeye secondary. I am anxious to see which half of the IU game represents the real OSU defense.

Comings And Goings

The staff of Buckeye Sports Bulletin bids farewell to staff writer James Grega, who

leaves after two years of service to BSB. James made his mark on coverage of Ohio State football and women's basketball, and his easy-going nature and sense of humor will be missed. We wish James the best in his future endeavors and know he will always be part of the BSB family.

With this issue, we welcome the addition of Garrett Stepien as a staff writer. Garrett comes to us from New Jersey. He is a Rutgers graduate, where he served as sports editor of The Daily Targum and was also the lead writer on the men's basketball beat. He was a contributor to ScarletReport.com, the Rutgers affiliate of the Scout Network, and also worked for ScarletInsiders.com.

We know that Garrett will find the winning ways of the Ohio State football team a change from the efforts of his alma mater, and we are confident, with as frequently as we eat it here, that he will get used to Ohio pizza soon.

Welcome aboard, Garrett.

Remembering Holbrook

Any longtime reader of this column knows that I love the “From the Pages of BSB” feature, which in this issue appears on page 35. There is almost always something that proves ironic or interesting with the benefit of years of hindsight or some tidbit that I had long forgotten.

In this issue a rant from former Ohio President Karen Holbrook from a post-OSU job interview caught my attention.

She reportedly said she had to deal with a “culture of rioting” at Ohio State, one where, “They think it's fun to flip cars, to really have absolute drunken orgies.”

“When you win a game, you riot. When you lose a game, you riot. When spring comes, you riot. African-American Heritage Festival weekend, you riot.”

But this comes from the lady who banned drinking at Ohio State tailgates, one of the more absurd chapters in Ohio State history.

The former president never seemed to grasp the idea that at a school like Ohio State, football Saturdays are part of the overall college experience. Exciting football Saturdays actually help attract good students and good professors and good donors, which in the end adds up to a better academic institution. President Holbrook just wasn't a good fit for Ohio State, and the fact that she was interviewing for a job at Florida Gulf Coast University says a lot about her status in the academic community after her ill-fated experience in Columbus.

Off To A Poor Start

No View From 15th & High is complete without me mentioning poor postal service. Many of you got a dose of postal reality with our Football Preview issue, which was mailed on Aug. 22. Many people in Columbus got their BSBs a week or more after they were mailed, and readers in the Toledo area may still be waiting for their papers.

The good news is that, on the flip side, we had readers in such places as Washington state and Washington, D.C., who got their Buckeye Sports Bulletins in a matter of days.

If you had problems or think you are going to have problems, we strongly suggest upgrading to first-class mail in an envelope at least for football season. The upgrade is only \$27, which goes to the increased postage and the cost of the envelope, and should give you more consistent service from now through the Michigan game. An upgrade through recruiting season is just \$37. Send your check to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212, or give us a call at (614) 486-2202 to upgrade with a credit card.