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“For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More”

April 20, 2019



SONNY BROCKWAY

TAKING HIS TIME – Ohio State head coach Ryan Day is not ready to make a decision between redshirt freshman quarterback Matthew Baldwin (left) and sophomore transfer Justin Fields.

Quarterback Battle To Continue Into Fall

By **ANDREW LIND**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Unlike last spring when former head coach Urban Meyer named Dwayne Haskins his starting quarterback shortly after the conclusion of spring practice, the competition between Ohio State sophomore Justin Fields and redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin may continue well into fall camp.

“I don’t think, right now, that we’re going to make a decision on that,” head coach Ryan Day said following the Gray’s 35-17 win over the Scarlet in the Buckeyes’ annual spring game on April 13. “I think it will continue through the preseason.”

Neither quarterback was exceptional in the contest, as Fields completed just 4 of 13 passes for 131 yards and a touchdown for the Gray team – with most of those yards coming on a 98-yard strike to senior wideout Binjimen Victor. Baldwin split his time between the two teams, meanwhile, and finished the day 20 of 36 for 246 yards and two touchdowns. He also threw two interceptions.

“I think that they both did a good job today,” Day said. “They both flashed at times. It’s still a work in progress. We’ve still got work to do. But I thought that they gave some of the receivers a chance. Some of it’s hard, when you’re not in the tackle situation, is it a sack, is it not? Do we break out? And Justin, he can kind of create on the edge a little bit, so we didn’t get a chance to see that as much. I thought Matthew made a couple really nice throws down the field, too.”

Fields has been the presumed starter following his transfer from Georgia in January, and his ability to make plays with his feet – in addition to with his arm – makes it easy to see why he was a five-star prospect

coming out of high school. He ran the ball eight times for 38 yards and a touchdown, a dynamic that was missing from Ohio State’s record-setting offense last season.

When assessing their performances, Day and his staff – which includes offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson and passing game coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich – must keep in mind their young quarterbacks are not grizzled veterans, but rather works in progress.

“These guys, they should have been in high school at this time last year,” Day said. “They’re still growing, they’re still making mistakes. To say we know where they are in terms of finished product, it’s hard to tell. They still have a long way to go.”

Though Baldwin enrolled in classes in January 2018, he redshirted last season while he recovered from an ACL injury that required surgery. Although he was back to full strength by the end of the year, Baldwin has yet to appear in a game with the Buckeyes.

Fields was also an early enrollee who played in 12 games for the Bulldogs last season as the backup to established starter Jake Fromm. But he’s been in Columbus for only a few months, and learning the ins and outs of the playbook on the fly is not an easy task.

“I’m working my hardest to learn it as fast as possible,” Fields said. “The stuff we have in right now I feel I have a grasp on.”

Baldwin did not speak with the media because sports information director Jerry Emig could not find him in the locker room after the game, but Fields believes he and the rest of his unit are just starting to scratch the surface of their potential.

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OPINION

New Quarterbacks Signal Return To Old Ways

If there were any takeaways from the Ohio State football team's less-than-glorified scrimmage held April 13, it was that while the Urban Meyer era is over, the recently retired coach's go-to offensive strategy is very much alive and well.

At least, it had better be come fall.

Following a one-year respite (some might say aberration) during which Dwayne Haskins figuratively and literally filled Midwestern skies with pigskins on a regular basis, the Buckeyes appear to be headed back to the kind of offense that helped Meyer win three national championships – some variation of a read-option attack that relies more upon the athleticism than the arm strength of the starting quarterback.

Eager to see if the hype matched the performance of Georgia transfer quarterback Justin Fields, I have to admit to a little disappointment after watching the annual spring game. Some of that can be traced to what we all got used to witnessing last year, but moving forward, making comparisons of any Ohio State quarterback to Haskins is going to be extremely unfair.

That said, I thought or at least hoped Fields would be making a little better showing in the passing department than four completions in 13 attempts for 131 yards and a touchdown. Nearly three quarters of that yardage came on a 98-yard touchdown play to Binjimen Victor late in the second period, and roughly 60 of those yards came after the catch.

Fields did seem to get into a kind of rhythm with some medium-range throws midway through the second period. But for the most part, he didn't seem to be on the same page with his receivers and had no real feel for the deep ball. Even the long touchdown pass to Victor was slightly underthrown and a play made easier when Scarlet cornerback Lloyd McFarquhar fell down in coverage.

Where Fields did seem to excel was running the football. Although all quarterbacks were wearing no-contact black jerseys, and there was no tackling to speak of during the afternoon, Fields still managed to total eight carries for 38 yards and a touchdown.

Although it was worth only five yards, his touchdown run was a thing of beauty and leads me to the premise that Fields will be featured in more of a read-option offense that favored the likes of Braxton Miller and J.T. Barrett rather than any all-out aerial assault utilized when Cardale Jones or Dwayne Haskins was under center. Fields took a second-quarter snap on a designed quarterback sweep, and although Scarlet safety Isaiah Pryor appeared to have an angle, Fields effortlessly got to the edge and motored into the end zone.

Fields was charged with four sacks during the afternoon, but because of the rules of the day, it's difficult to ascertain how many of those pressures the 6-3, 223-pound sophomore could have escaped. He did get loose in the third quarter for a 30-yard scamper – the longest run from scrimmage during the afternoon – that displayed a little bit of power and a whole lot of speed.

Perhaps Fields is a better passer than he showed during his first quote-unquote game inside Ohio Stadium. He did, after all, complete 69.2 percent of his passes last year in limited action at Georgia. And he acknowledged his shortcomings in the OSU spring game, giving himself a C-minus when asked to grade his performance.

I would think C-minus is about right. But that probably won't be good enough when

Florida Atlantic comes to Columbus in late August, and it sure as heck isn't going to cut it when the Buckeyes reach the meat of their 2019 schedule. Simply put, Fields is going to have to play better than he did during the spring game.

Despite what Ryan Day might say, Fields will be the starting quarterback for Ohio State this fall, and it is now up to the new head coach to decide what kind of offense – run-first or otherwise – he wants to build around his starter.



What About Baldwin?

His self-assessment aside, there is certainly no one who believes Fields is going to remain a C-plus prospect. There is a reason he was rated so highly coming out of high school two years ago.

But let's say, just for the sake of argument, that things don't work out the way everyone believes they will. Can the Buckeyes be successful with Matthew Baldwin at quarterback? Of course they can be successful with Baldwin, although like Fields, he is going to have to show a little more than he did in the spring game.

Baldwin, who redshirted last year behind Haskins and backup Tate Martell, certainly has the pedigree to be a success. He threw for more than 4,000 yards as well as 44 touchdowns during his senior season at Lake Travis High School in Austin, Texas, the same program that has produced several college QBs, including former Oklahoma and current Cleveland Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield.

Unfortunately, Baldwin showed more than a little rust during the spring game. He played for both the Scarlet and Gray squads and wound up totaling 20 completions on 36 attempts for 246 yards and two touchdowns.

But while those numbers were decent enough on the surface, it's worth noting that Baldwin also struggled at times. Like Fields, there were multiple times when he was not in sync with his receivers, and there were times when he seemed to struggle with his footwork.

Baldwin sometimes relies on the strength of his arm and appeared to throw either flat-footed or off his back foot, and that lack of balance led to a couple of poorly thrown balls.

Early in the game, while moving to his left, he drilled a pass into the ground at the feet of his intended target. A short time later, he failed to step into a throw over the middle and was nearly picked off by Scarlet linebacker Malik Harrison.

Baldwin's two interceptions came when Gray safety Amir Riep took advantage of a ball thrown behind Scarlet H-back Jaalen Gill and when the quarterback stared down Scarlet receiver Elijah Gardiner and allowed Gray safety Jahsen Wint to make a relatively easy pick.

But Baldwin had his positive moments, too. It was the 6-3, 215-pound sophomore who threw the ball on which true freshman Garrett Wilson leaped high to make an 18-yard touchdown grab in the second quarter, and Baldwin later exploited soft linebacker coverage on Gray H-Back C.J. Saunders to deliver a strike for an eight-yard touchdown

just before halftime.

Two other quarterbacks also saw action for Ohio State during the spring game.

Chris Chugunov, who played three seasons at West Virginia before joining the Buckeyes last season as a graduate transfer, went 3 of 10 for 81 yards and an interception. Most of his yardage came on a 59-yard completion to Gardiner, who took advantage of a complete bust in the Gray secondary.

And Danny Vanatsky, a sophomore walk-on from Cincinnati, got off five throws, completing two of them for 23 yards.

Chugunov and Vanatsky flashed some talent, but let's be brutally honest. Although the Buckeyes proved in 2014 that you can catch lightning in a bottle with a third-string quarterback, history tells us that any team that must dip that far down on the quarterback depth chart is going to be in trouble.

Some Final Thoughts

- Should Day want to make full use of his passing game, it appears he has an arsenal of weapons at his disposal despite the losses of Parris Campbell, Johnnie Dixon and Terry McLaurin. In addition to K.J. Hill, Victor and a healthy Austin Mack returning, Gill and Wilson appear to be oozing with talent. Gill grabbed a game-high seven receptions for 95 yards, while Wilson's leaping touchdown snag was apparently a continuation of what the true freshman – another Lake Travis product – had been doing all spring.

- If you're looking for an under-the-radar performance during the spring game, you might focus on Master Teague. The redshirt freshman running back took full advantage of seven carries, turning them into 75 yards and a pair of touchdowns. Not bad, especially considering the defense needed only to put a hand on ball carriers for the play to be whistled dead.

- Because of the liberal tackling rules, it was difficult to gauge defensive performances although Riep's interception was an excellent play. He leaped for the ball and then returned it 25 yards to set up the first touchdown of the afternoon.


- The leading tackler in the game was redshirt freshman defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste, who totaled five tackles, including a sack, and a forced fumble for the Gray team. The leading tackler for the Scarlet squad was McFarquhar. (You thought I was making up that name, didn't you?) The redshirt freshman walk-on cornerback, who was credited with four stops, hails from the same Brush High School near Cleveland that produced such former Buckeyes as Jim Laughlin and Roy Hall.

- Things didn't go very well April 13 for Martell at his new school during the first of two open scrimmages. Trying to win a three-man battle at Miami (Fla.) to become the starting quarterback in 2019, the former Buckeye completed only 4 of 11 attempts for 78 yards. That performance included an interception during his first series when Martell threw into heavy traffic.

- Even in the second half, when first-year Hurricanes head coach Manny Diaz let Martell run his second-team offense against the third-team defense, the junior struggled to move the ball. On his first drive of the third quarter, Martell began with a throw behind a receiver, tripped while going back for a play-action pass, and then threw a third-down pass about 10 yards short of his target.

- According to The Miami Herald, one fan attempted to start a chant of "overrated!" but no one followed.

- Martell has one more chance for redemption this spring. The Hurricanes have a final open scrimmage scheduled for April 20.



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Former Buckeyes Join In Spring Game Festivities

Continued From Page 1

"Overall this spring, there were ups and downs. That just comes with the growing pains, like Coach says. I just have to keep improving, keep working, and I think we'll be good come the (beginning of the) season," said Fields, who wasn't particularly satisfied with his performance in the spring game and gave himself a C-minus grade. "I'm very hard on myself, so I'm kind of a perfectionist. I know I can do better. I've done better in practice. But I definitely see us having a bright future."

He recognizes he has plenty to work on in order to solidify his spot atop the depth chart by the time the season opener against Florida Atlantic rolls around on Aug. 31.

"I think I need to improve in every aspect of my game," he said, "running, passing, just getting better. I feel like there's always a place to improve, no matter how good you get."

Teammates have taken note of the steady progress of the quarterbacks this spring, particular as leaders in the huddle and in offensive meetings.

"They've made a ton of strides," fifth-year senior H-Back C.J. Saunders said of Fields and Baldwin. "They were already good at the beginning of spring, and now, I've just seen both of them step up as leaders so much."

Redshirt senior H-Back K.J. Hill echoed that sentiment and noted how Baldwin and Fields have become more confident and comfortable in the pocket over the course of 15 practices.

"They were kind of shook in there at the beginning, but now they're standing firm and going through their progressions," Hill said.

Sophomore right guard Wyatt Davis also heaped praise upon Fields.

"When Justin first came in, he was still trying to figure everything out," Davis said. "He's really taken that step on being vocal, being confident in his calls and what he wants us to do. His overall swagger – having a quarterback who's confident like that – helps us get going. He's really taken a role in becoming that leader that we need."



SONNY BROCKWAY

FOLLOWING MEYER'S BLUEPRINT – Ryan Day (left) oversees the circle drill ahead of Ohio State's annual spring game.

"You can see the progression that he's had from when he first got here to now. He's definitely taken that lead of controlling the offense, and I feel like as the season goes on and as we get closer to the season, he's going to get better with that."

That said, Fields hasn't won the starting gig just yet. He'll continue to battle Baldwin in the meeting room throughout the summer and on the field in preseason camp. And that competition will ultimately make the Buckeyes better.

"They'll keep pulling for each other, and as long as that room gets strong, that's the key," Day said.

Players Sidelined By Injuries

Ohio State was without several players who factor into the two-deep depth chart for the spring game, including running

back Demario McCall; wide receivers Jaylen Harris and Kamryn Babb; offensive tackle Thayer Munford; defensive tackle Robert Landers; linebackers Tuf Borland and Justin Hilliard; cornerback Marcus Williamson; and safeties Jordan Fuller, Marcus Hooker and Ronnie Hickman will not play to due various injuries.

Babb, who reportedly suffered a torn ACL during spring camp, and Hilliard, who suffered an Achilles injury and subsequently had surgery, are out indefinitely. Everyone else listed above is expected to return to full strength by the start of fall camp in late July or early August.

Former Players Return For Game

Ohio State's annual spring game not only functions as a glorified scrimmage in front of

thousands of fans, but it also serves as one of the biggest recruiting weekends of the entire calendar year. And there's no better recruiting tool than to put on display the sheer amount of talent the Buckeyes have sent to the National Football League over the last three decades.

Meyer always made it a point to invite his former players back to Ohio Stadium in the offseason or during their open weeks during the season, and Day made sure to follow that blueprint on April 13.

Among the current NFL players in attendance were quarterback Cardale Jones (Los Angeles Chargers); running back Ezekiel Elliott (Dallas Cowboys); wide receivers Ted Ginn Jr. (New Orleans Saints), Braxton Miller (Philadelphia Eagles) and Michael Thomas (Saints); offensive tackle Jamarco Jones (Seattle Seahawks); centers Pat Elflein (Minnesota Vikings) and Corey Linsley (Green Bay Packers); defensive ends Sam Hubbard (Cincinnati Bengals), Jalyn Holmes (Vikings) and Tyquan Lewis (Indianapolis Colts); defensive tackle Tracy Sprinkle (free agent); linebacker Darron Lee (New York Jets); cornerbacks Gareon Conley (Oakland Raiders), Marshon Lattimore (Saints) and Denzel Ward (Cleveland Browns); and safety Malik Hooker (Colts). Many of those players were honored during a timeout in the first half, as the upcoming season will mark the five-year anniversary of the 2014 national championship.

During another break in action, several players from last year's team – including Haskins, running back Mike Weber, H-back Parris Campbell, wide receivers Johnnie Dixon and Terry McLaurin, offensive tackle Isaiah Prince, offensive guard Demetrius Knox, defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones, and linebacker Dante Booker – received their Big Ten championship and Rose Bowl rings.

Heisman Trophy-winning running back Eddie George (1992-95) was the game's honorary captain, while former linebackers James Laurinaitis (Big Ten Network color commentator) and Bobby Carpenter (BTN sideline reporter) were also on hand.



SONNY BROCKWAY (LEFT), OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

ROAD GRADERS – On the photo at left, center Josh Myers (left) and Joshua Alabi (right) combine to block defensive tackle Jashon Cornell in the first quarter of Ohio State's spring game. Meanwhile, Ohio State welcomed back 1995 Heisman Trophy winner Eddie George to be the spring game's honorary captain.

COVER STORY

TOP SPRING GAME PERFORMERS

Redshirt Freshman Running Back Master Teague

Junior starting running back J.K. Dobbins saw limited action in Ohio State's annual spring game as an established starter, which gave Teague an opportunity to run with the first-team offense.

Teague carried the ball seven times for 75 yards (10.7 average) and two touchdowns, hitting the hole hard on each play and showing an impressive burst of speed when asked to run on the outside.

He also showed decent hands out of the backfield, bringing down one pass for five yards. If it weren't for a "no tackling" rule, the 5-11 and 220-pound Teague would have certainly broken off a few long runs and easily eclipsed the 100-yard mark.

Compare that to early enrollee Marcus Crowley, who rushed for 50 yards and one touchdown on 10 carries against the second- and third-team defenses, and redshirt junior Demario McCall, who has been limited the entire spring with a calf injury and did not participate in the scrimmage, and it's safe to assume Teague has the leg up on the backup running back position heading toward fall camp.

Redshirt Freshman H-Back Jaelen Gill

Gill finds himself in a similar position to Teague, as fifth-year senior K.J. Hill will see a majority of the reps at H-back this fall. But, simply put, he's shown he's too talented to keep off the field.

Playing with the second unit, Gill was targeted 12 times and finished the spring game with a game-high seven catches for 95 yards. He also fielded a few punts and will presumably be in the mix for kick return duties this fall.

With Parris Campbell off to the NFL, Gill's playmaking skill set is unmatched by anyone else on Ohio State's roster.

Gill is arguably better than Campbell was at this stage of his career, too, so it won't be surprising to see him have a significant role on offense and as a special teams weapon this fall.

Freshman Wide Receiver Garrett Wilson

A five-star prospect who grew up in Dublin, Ohio, but played his high school ball at Austin (Texas) Lake Travis, Wilson arrived at Ohio State with almost unrealistic expectations.

His 18-yard touchdown reception, where he elevated over cornerback Sevnyn Banks for a spectacular catch in the back corner of the end zone, proved he's more than just hype, however.

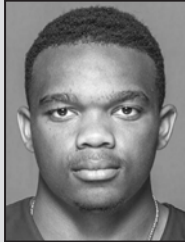
Wilson finished the day with four catches for 44 yards and that touchdown catch, which surely solidifies his

spot behind senior Binjimen Victor at the Z (flanker) receiver position.

The touchdown, which tied the game at 7 early in the second quarter, was certainly an unforgettable moment for Wilson and redshirt freshman quarterback Matthew Baldwin, as the two played their high school ball and scored their first touchdown before a collegiate crowd together.

Redshirt Freshman Defensive End Javontae Jean-Baptiste

Though starters Chase Young and Jonathan Cooper and sophomores Tyreke Smith and Tyler Friday sit ahead of him on the depth chart, Jean-Baptiste made a strong case for playing time in the fall.

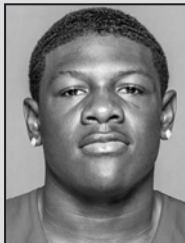


Master Teague

He finished the spring game leading the Gray in tackles with six and also recorded one sack and a forced fumble in the second half. That followed up a two-sack effort in a full-team scrimmage in front of the media one week prior.

Jean-Baptiste's athleticism has never been in question, but he needed to bulk up in order to make an impact along the defensive line. He's added 30 pounds since he arrived on campus, which should help him crack the rotation. But keep in mind, true freshmen Zach Harrison and Noah Potter will be right on his heels as they hope to find their own spots in the rotation.

Junior Safety Jahsen Wint



Jahsen Wint

Much has been said this spring about how junior Brendon White is tailor-made for the newly implemented "Bullet" position, but Wint also showed promise in that role during the spring game.

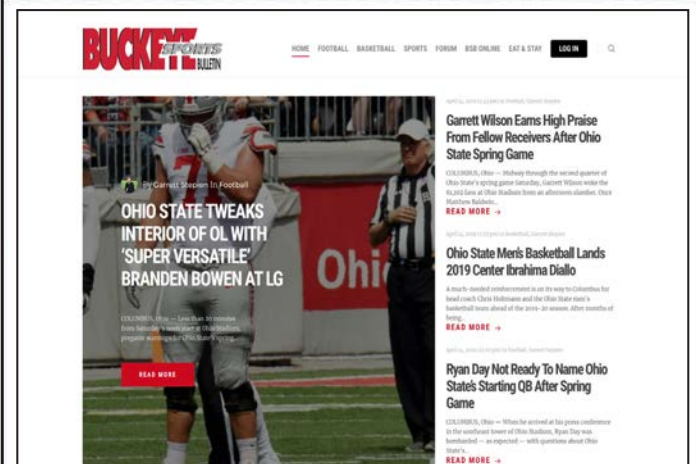
After struggling in the traditional safety spot last fall, the fourth-year junior from Brooklyn (N.Y.) Erasmus Hall seemingly played with a newfound confidence and looked remarkably comfortable as he picked off two passes in the first half while rotating back and forth between strong safety and line-backer.

Wint doesn't have a clear path to playing time this fall, with White penciled in as the do-it-all linebacker/safety hybrid, senior captain Jordan Fuller back at free safety; and junior Isaiah Pryor, sophomores Shaun Wade and Josh Proctor and redshirt freshman Marcus Hooker fighting for playing time.

However, his performance during the spring game – as well as that of junior Amir Riep, who also recorded an interception for the Gray team – gives Ohio State's much-maligned safety unit some much-needed depth moving forward.

– Andrew Lind

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Teague Leads Gray To 35-17 Win Over Scarlet

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ryan Day era began, sort of, under mostly sunny skies at Ohio Stadium on April 13 in Ohio State's annual spring game with the Gray recording a 35-17 win over the Scarlet.

Day, who replaced Urban Meyer as head coach on Jan. 2, was interim coach for the first three games of the 2018 season when Meyer was suspended. But this was the first time on the sideline with "his" program.

The glorified scrimmage drew 61,102 to Ohio Stadium, with a reduced capacity of 76,000 because of stadium renovations and a kickoff temperature of 61 degrees.

There were modified rules, including 10-minute quarters with a running clock in the second half and no live tackling. Instead, the players were mostly grabbed and held. And, of course, no contact with the quarterbacks, who wore black jerseys.

Everyone came to see the expected quarterback duel between Georgia transfer Justin Fields and redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin, who missed last season while recovering from knee surgery.

Fields, playing exclusively for the first-team Gray, was the front-runner coming in to replace Dwayne Haskins and did nothing to discourage that.

Fields was 4 of 13 for 131 yards, including a 98-yard touchdown pass to senior wide receiver Binjimen Victor. He also rushed eight times for 38 yards and a score.

Baldwin, meanwhile, played for both teams. He was 9 of 15 for 119 yards and a touchdown for the Gray squad and 11 of 21 for 127 yards, one touchdown and two interceptions with the Scarlet team.

Redshirt freshman running back Master Teague led all rushers with 75 yards and two touchdowns on seven rushes for the Gray. Early enrollee Marcus Crowley, on the Scarlet, gained 50 yards on 10 totes with a score.

Victor's two grabs went for 107 yards. The Scarlet was led by redshirt freshman H-Back Jaelen Gill (seven catches for 95 yards). Sophomore wide receiver Elijah Gardiner had 72 yards on two catches, and freshman wideout Garrett Wilson added 44 yards with four catches for the Scarlet, including a leaping 18-yard touchdown catch.

The following are highlights from the game action.

First Quarter

Fields got the first snaps for the Gray to start the game and went three-and-out. Junior running back J.K. Dobbins rushed for 4 yards, Fields' first pass to Victor was tipped incomplete and Fields was then "sacked" by fifth-year senior defensive tackle Davon Hamilton for a two-yard loss.

Quarterback Chris Chugunov guided the second-team Scarlet on their first possession and on third down had a 19-yard strike to Gill, but the drive ended at the Scarlet 46.

Baldwin's first series for the Gray included a 33-yard toss to senior H-Back K.J. Hill at the 50 that was underthrown, but four more plays netted only five yards.

Baldwin stayed on the field to quarterback the Scarlet in a drive that ended when sophomore running back Xavier Johnson lost a fumble at the Gray 35 after running for no gain. The turnover was caused by redshirt freshman defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste and recovered by sophomore cornerback Sevn Banks.

Second Quarter

On the second play of the period, Baldwin – still in for the Scarlet – was intercepted by junior safety Amir Riep at the Scarlet 45-yard line. He returned it 25 yards.

It took the Gray three plays to go the 20 yards for a 7-0 lead with 8:52 left in the half. Teague rushed for 10, Fields found Victor for nine and then Teague carried it in from the 1-yard line.

Baldwin engineered a six-play, 65-yard drive for the Scarlet in 2:11 to tie the score at 7. The first of two big plays was a 19-yarder to Gill, from nearby Westerville (Ohio) South, to the Gray 18. On the next snap, Wilson made his spectacular leaping grab in the right corner of the end zone over Banks with 6:41 left.

Fields used his arm and feet to take the Gray 65 yards in nine plays, using 2:22 off the clock for a 14-7 lead. He opened the possession with a 16-yard dash around the left end to the Scarlet 49-yard line. After two incompletions, he connected with senior wide receiver Austin Mack for gains of 13 and 11 to the 25-yard line. Teague ran for seven and 13 yards before Fields ran to the right pylon and scored from five yards out at the 4:19 mark.

Baldwin had a poor next drive for the Scarlet. First, he lost 4 yards on a fumble at the Gray 33-yard line. Then, on the ensuing play, he was intercepted at the 2-yard line by junior safety Jahsen Wint.

Fields then took over. On 3rd-and-10 from his own 2-yard line, Fields found Victor down the right sideline at the Gray 43-yard line, and he sped the rest of the way for a 98-yard touchdown and a 21-7 lead with 1:32 left.

The Gray lead was extended to 28-7 with 37 seconds left after the Scarlet turned it over when Wint intercepted Chugunov at the Gray 48-yard line.

Baldwin returned to the Gray side and had a 29-yarder to senior tight end Rashod Berry to the Scarlet 8. After an incomplete pass, Baldwin hit an eight-yard touchdown pass to redshirt senior receiver C.J. Saunders to cap a six-play, 52-yard drive in 54 seconds.

Chugunov made amends when the Scarlet got the ball back when he spotted Gardiner for 59 yards to the Gray 6-yard line. Chugunov missed Gardiner and junior tight end Jake Hausmann on consecutive plays, and junior kicker Blake Haubeil made a 23-yard field goal as time expired to make it 28-10. The drive was 59 yards in five plays in 32 seconds.

Third Quarter

The Scarlet closed within 28-17 at 5:05 of the quarter, with Baldwin taking the group 65 yards in 11 plays in 4:55. Baldwin looked more comfortable and had three passes to Gill for a total of 29 and another of 14 yards to the freshman Wilson, a former teammate at Austin (Texas) Lake Travis. Crowley completed the drive with a two-yard run.

Teague and Fields collaborated to make it 35-17 with 2:24 left. Fields ran for 30 to the Scarlet 35 before Teague rushed for 17. After Fields was sacked for a four-yard loss, Teague ran 22 yards for the Gray score at the end of 65-yard drive that used five plays and 2:41.

Fourth Quarter

There was very little of note in the quarter although fourth-string quarterback Daniel Vanatsky got into game and had a nice 18-yard sideline pass to Gill for the Scarlet. Vanatsky was 2 of 5 for 23 yards.

The game took a tidy 1:54 to play.



SONNY BROCKWAY

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF AN OPPORTUNITY – With junior running back J.K. Dobbins (below) on limited duty as an established starter, redshirt freshman Master Teague (top) took reps with the first-team offense.





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OHIO STATE SPRING GAME

Spring Game Box Score

Gray 37, Scarlet 17

April 13, 2019 – Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
SCARLET	0	10	7	0	- 17
GRAY	0	28	7	0	- 35

Second Quarter

GRAY – Teague, 1-yard run (Haubeil kick); 3 plays, 20 yards, 0:50 TOP.
SCARLET – Wilson, 18-yard pass from Baldwin (Haubeil kick); 6 plays, 65 yards, 2:11 TOP.
GRAY – Fields, 5-yard run (Haubeil kick); 9 plays, 65 yards, 2:22 TOP.
GRAY – Victor, 98-yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick); 3 plays, 98 yards, 0:23 TOP.
GRAY – Saunders, 8-yard pass from Baldwin (Haubeil kick); 6 plays, 52 yards, 0:54 TOP.
SCARLET – Haubeil, 23-yard field goal; 5 plays, 59 yards, 0:32 TOP.

Third Quarter

SCARLET – Crowley, 2-yard run (Haubeil kick); 11 plays, 65 yards, 4:55 TOP.
GRAY – Teague, 22-yard run (Haubeil kick); 5 plays, 65 yards, 2:41 TOP.

Att. – 61,102.

Weather – 61 degrees, partly cloudy; wind SW 7 mph.

Team Statistics

	SCARLET	GRAY
First Downs	19	14
Rushing	5	7
Passing	12	7
Penalty	2	0
Rushes-Yards	25-83	22-155
Passing Yards	231	250
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	16-36-3	13-28-0
Offensive Plays	61	50
Total Net Yards	314	405
Third Down Efficiency	4-11	3-8
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	0-3
Punts-Avg.	3-37.3	2-43.5
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	0-0
Penalties	0-0	2-9
Time of Possession	22:55	17:05

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **SCARLET:** Crowley 10-50; Johnson 5-28; McMahon 3-13; Vanatsky 1-2; Baldwin 4-6; Chugunov 2-0. **GRAY:** Teague 7-75; Fields 8-52; Cope 4-33; Dobbins 3-11.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **SCARLET:** Baldwin 11-22-2-127-1; Chugunov 3-10-1-81-0; Vanatsky 2-5-0-23-0. **GRAY:** Baldwin 9-15-0-119-1; Fields 4-13-0-131-1.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **SCARLET:** Gill 7-95; Wilson 4-44; Gardiner 2-72; Hausmann 1-12; McMahon 1-5; Crowley 1-3. **GRAY:** Saunders 3-35; Victor 2-107; Hill 2-43; Mack 2-24; Berry 1-29; Dobbins 1-7; Teague 1-5; Prater 1-0.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **SCARLET:** Chrisman 1-44-44. **GRAY:** Chrisman 2-87-44.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **SCARLET:** None. **GRAY:** Gill, 1-0.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **SCARLET:** None. **GRAY:** None.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – **SCARLET:** None. **GRAY:** None.

FUMBLES – **SCARLET:** Johnson 1; Baldwin 1. **GRAY:** None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES – **SCARLET:** None. **GRAY:** Jean-Baptiste 1.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **SCARLET:** None. **GRAY:** Riep 1-25; Wint 2-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – **SCARLET:** Smith 1.5-6; Hamdan 1.6-6; Hamilton 1-2. **GRAY:** Jean-Baptiste 1-2; Potter 1-3; Garrett 1-5; Jackson 1-3.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **SCARLET:** Smith 1.5-6; Browning 1-2; Hamdan 1.5-6; Hamilton 1-2. **GRAY:** Jean-Baptiste 1-2; Potter 1-3; Garrett 1-5; Jackson 1-3.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – **SCARLET:** McFarquhar 3-2-4; Smith 3-1-3.5; Donovan 2-1-2.5; Browning 2-1-2.5; Schmiesing 2-1-2.5; Wilburn 2-0-2; Okudah 2-0-2; Cooper 1-1-1.5; Hamdan 1-1-1.5; Hamilton 1-0-1; Wade 1-0-1; Harrison 1-0-1; Brown 1-0-1; Hausmann 1-0-1; White 1-0-1; Dever 1-0-1; Pryor 1-0-1. **GRAY:** Jean-Baptiste 4-2-5; Riep 4-1-4.5; Winte 4-0-4; Gant 2-4-4; Potter 2-2-3; Garrett 2-2-3; Batsche 2-1-2.5; Mitchell 2-1-2.5; Sinclair 2-0-2; Williams 1-1-1.5; Pope 1-0-1; Jackson 1--1; Hamdan 1-0-1; Proctor 1-0-1; Johnson 0-1-0.5; Fankhauser 0-1-0.5.



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Early Enrollees In Line For Immediate Impact

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Although the 2019 recruiting class in its 17-member entirety arrives for summer courses the first week of June, six signees from the 247Sports composite's No. 14 group nationally got a head start on their Ohio State careers Jan. 7 when they enrolled early for the spring semester.

In addition to sophomore quarterback Justin Fields, who transferred Jan. 4 from Georgia, the freshmen Buckeyes joined in time for winter workouts Jan. 17 through March 2 and spring camp March 6 through April 13.

From assistant athletic director for football sports performance Mickey Marotti in the weight room to head coach Ryan Day on the field, how have OSU's early enrollees acclimated to their first taste of life at the next level? BSB examines where they are with commentary from Day plus respective position coaches and players.

Running Back Marcus Crowley

One of Ohio State's -later additions in the 2019 cycle, Marcus Crowley came to Columbus for spring enrollment just two months after his flip from Miami (Fla.). In the time since he pledged to the Buckeyes during an official visit the weekend of Nov. 3 for the team's 36-31 win over Nebraska at Ohio Stadium, Crowley, a four-star recruit, has shown flashes. Just a month into Crowley's enrollment, Day anticipated an immediate impact, with OSU's depth at the position lacking after Mike Weber declared for the NFL draft and Brian Snead transferred to Iowa Western Community College.

"When you look at what we've done at

running back, I think we've improved there," Day said Feb. 6 on National Signing Day. "We lost Mike. We lost Brian. We get Steele (Chambers), and Marcus is already here doing a good job. Steele is somebody who is very, very talented, comes from a great family. Marcus (was Florida's 2018) Gatorade Player of the Year. We improved our depth there. Those guys will both compete - Marcus in the spring, Steele in the preseason."

Crowley (6-1, 205) hit the ground running in spring camp, seeing an uptick in reps as junior Demario McCall nursed a nagging calf injury. Without junior J.K. Dobbins involved for the team's April 5 scrimmage at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, the 11th practice of spring camp, Crowley ran with the first- and second-team offenses behind redshirt freshman Master Teague.

"He's swimming, he's swimming - as he should be," running backs coach Tony Alford said of the Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy product. "But the good thing that we're doing is we have thrown him into the fire, so to speak, and he's responding. He's going to make mistakes. These are very prideful guys. When they make mistakes, it bothers them - as it should. But that's what he needs, he needs to get thrown in that fire. But he's got some skills. All of a sudden, he'll flash and do something, like, 'OK, here he goes.' But he's a tough kid."

Defensive End Zach Harrison

After a three-horse race between Michigan, Ohio State and Penn State, the Buckeyes added Zach Harrison, a five-star defensive end from Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange, to their 2019 class. The decision lifted the weight of the world off his shoulders.



SONNY BROCKWAY

THE HYPE IS REAL - Known for his highlight-reel catches, Garrett Wilson gave Ohio State fans a glimpse of the future with his touchdown reception.

"Zach Harrison, going through the recruiting process, I know there's a lot on his plate," Day said. "He's come here and blossomed. He's been killing it in the weight room."

Following winter workouts, he turned heads once the helmet and pads went on during spring camp with the Buckeyes. Under the tutelage of both sixth-year defensive line coach Larry Johnson and first-year co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison, the latter of whom recruited him with linebackers coach Al Washington at

Michigan, Harrison has transitioned smoothly since he came to campus.

"One thing that is really good is that we had a great relationship before he got here," Johnson said of Harrison. "That has really carried over. That's what I think has made the difference. So he's taking the coaching really well. He's really bright, always coming into the office, saying, 'Let's watch the videotape. How can I get better?' And that's what you love about him."

Harrison (6-6, 255) has worked his way into

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

the rotation at defensive end for 2019 behind veterans such as junior Chase Young (6-5, 265). He also lined up at three-technique defensive tackle with sophomore Tyreke Smith (6-4, 267) on the inside while senior defensive end Jonathon Cooper (6-4, 257) and Young manned the outside during OSU's April 5 scrimmage, a sneak peek at the updated "Rushmen" package during pass-rush situations on third down.

"It's been real good," Young said of mentoring Harrison, who had his black stripe removed on April 12. "Zach, he – like Coach Mick said the other day – is the best high school player who's come in early who pays attention to detail. And when I tell him things, he pays attention, down to the tee. Technique wise, getting off the rock, he tries to use his hands, technique every day. Zach's doing real good."

Safety Ronnie Hickman

An ACL tear midway through the 2018 season cut his senior campaign short at Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic and kept him from full participation during winter workouts and spring camp, but Ronnie Hickman has been turning heads since he arrived in Columbus. The four-star safety appears destined for a redshirt in the fall as he completes his recovery process, but six months into his rehabilitation, he has impressed Ohio State's coaching staff. Unprompted after the Buckeyes' seventh practice of spring camp March 27, special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes raved about Hickman's attention to detail.

"One guy that's not even practicing right now that's caught my eye just in the meeting room is Ronnie Hickman," Barnes said. "Just how he goes about his business, for a guy that should still be in high school, you watch him in every meeting. He knows the answer to every

question. He's asking me questions without even me prompting him, things like that. So I've just been really impressed with him."

Considered by multiple scouting services to eventually be a candidate for outside linebacker, Hickman entered OSU at safety. He could, however, grow into a player at the defense's new hybrid linebacker/safety "bullet" position. Junior safety Brendon White (6-2, 215), who entered the program in the summer of 2017 with two-way potential like Hickman (6-1, 200) as a wide receiver and defensive back, draws comparisons.

Offensive Lineman Ryan Jacoby

The first of two early enrollees from Mentor, Ohio, Ryan Jacoby joined Ohio State's offensive line for spring camp with a purpose. While Jacoby was a four-star offensive tackle, fourth-year offensive line coach Greg Studrawa told BSB that he had a unique skill set. His versatility helps the Buckeyes patch up depth concerns at both guard and tackle until reinforcements from Rutgers graduate transfer center/guard Jonah Jackson (6-4, 305) and the three incoming freshmen arrive for summer enrollment in June.

"I'm really proud of how Ryan's doing right now, honestly," said sophomore center Josh Myers (6-5, 310), who enrolled early out of Miamisburg, Ohio, in January 2017. "He's doing a great job. He's doing way better than I did when I came in, honestly. Mentally, honestly, I'm really impressed with how he's doing. He's done some really complicated things that you almost never see young guys do. So I'm really excited to see where he goes in this journey. It's been awesome to watch him so far."

Defensive End Noah Potter

Day had praise for Noah Potter, who com-

mitted after last year's spring game.

"Noah Potter is a guy who has already shown he's going to work really hard, kind of a guy who we expect to challenge in the spring," the coach said.

Through the spring, Johnson saw Potter jump on the chance to make an impact. The 6-6, 252-pounder fills out OSU's depth at defensive end with room to grow in the rotation before fall camp comes in August.

"Young guys are what you'd expect, trying to transition to college football," Johnson said. "It's a faster pace for it and their eyes are big and wide, but I'll tell you what I like about them, they're working at it. And that's all I ask them is just play hard, keep learning and it will come to you. And that's what's happening right now."

With the departure of former All-America defensive end Nick Bosa, Potter received the coveted No. 97. The only OSU players to wear the number since 2012 were Nick (2016-18) and Joey Bosa (2013-15), two all-time greats in program history, which gives Potter two tough acts to follow.

"Sometimes I have flashbacks of watching 97," Johnson said. "Some different guys have been in that jersey number, so we'll see how it goes."

Wide Receiver Garrett Wilson

Garrett Wilson joined rare company April 8 when he shed his black helmet stripe after Ohio State's 12th practice of spring camp, becoming just the third early enrollee to do so since Urban Meyer implemented the tradition in 2012.

The 6-0, 188-pound Wilson came to Columbus from Austin (Texas) Lake Travis as a five-star wide receiver – the highest-rated recruit – with an opportunity for a large role after the position group lost fifth-year seniors Parris

Campbell, Johnnie Dixon and Terry McLaurin to graduation following the 2018 season.

From day one, Day acknowledged Wilson's elite potential.

"First off about Garrett is he comes from a great family, is a great person," Day said. "When you get around him, he's magnetic. The second thing is, he's amazing because he's a big-time basketball player. He's never really spent time on just football. His potential, as good as he is, is through the roof. Now he has to go through it."

"This is really the first time he's being challenged in the weight room. Coach Mick and his staff are all over him. He's already gotten better and made strides. He has a long way to go physically. That being said, his skill set is off the charts – his ball skills, adjusting to the balls down the field, route-running ability, length, as good as I've been around."

While seniors Austin Mack (6-2, 215) and Binjimen Victor (6-4, 199) headline the returning experience, Wilson is primed for a role in the rotation. Sophomore Chris Olave (6-1, 185) and Wilson are among the top options on the outside. Brian Hartline, who went from interim wide receivers coach in 2018 to permanent position coach for 2019, detailed Wilson's rise March 27 after the team's eighth practice of spring camp.

"My best compliment to him, I told him, 'You don't act like a freshman,'" Hartline said of Wilson. "When he first got in, he'll tell you, it was kind of a culture change. The kid should still be in high school. He's just doing a phenomenal job, whether I'm throwing him at 'Z,' at 'X,' his mental retention's really good. He really wants to learn from the guys. He's buying into the culture. So everything he's doing right now is on the right track, and I'm excited for him to continue to take small steps."

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Day Showcases New Staff At Coaching Clinic



GARRETT STEPIEN

LEARNING FROM THE BEST – Head coach Ryan Day spoke in front of hundreds of Ohio high school football coaches during Ohio State's annual coaches clinic.

By **GARRETT STEPIEN**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

For the first time in seven years, Urban Meyer was nowhere to be found at Ohio State's 88th annual football clinic from April 11-13.

Retired from his post as head football coach and now the assistant athletics director of athletics initiatives and relations, Meyer's move created an opportunity for the Buckeyes to showcase their new regime while they wrapped spring camp.

First-year head coach Ryan Day took the three-day event seriously, looking forward to getting around high school coaches in Ohio and beyond when he previewed the clinic April 10.

"Our clinic that we're putting on is really important to our staff," Day said after OSU's practice at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. "We've met on it several times. The thing that we're doing is we're really going to do a great job in the clinics of having an open-door policy and trying to be as real as we can, and give the coaches what they need in terms of helping the Ohio coaches and anybody else who's coming. There's going to be people outside of Ohio coming to this clinic, and we want to help them."

Ohio State's clinic kicked off April 11 with an evening session starting at 6:15 p.m. on the indoor field, where a pair of first-year assistants in co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison and passing game coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich presented.

Mattison delved into defensive practice techniques and philosophy, while Yurcich broke down quarterback footwork and drills in the intermediate passing game. Mattison, whom the Buckeyes hired Jan. 7 from Michigan, preached a fiery nature in OSU's practices with a points system in drills to dictate winners vs. losers and create competition.

"I'm really proud and honored to be representing Ohio State," Mattison said. "I'm excited for this upcoming season."

Through film heavy with practice examples of sophomore quarterback Justin Fields, Yurcich built on the philosophies Day taught before Ohio State elevated the two-year offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach to replace Meyer. Yurcich, whom the Buckeyes hired from Oklahoma State, referenced real-time cases where drills – such as an exercise with a hula hoop on the ground and a quarterback standing in the pocket while keeping his feet moving – translated to on-field highlights. In one instance, Yurcich pulled up 2018 quarterback Dwayne Haskins' throws Jan. 1 from OSU's 28-23 Rose Bowl win over Washington.

"I just really want to show all the people, especially the coaches in Ohio, how important this is to us and how we're going to be a resource for them," Day said April 10. "I got a lot of feedback on how excited the coaches are about coming to practice, about the way we're recruiting their kids, with the way our staff is just attacking Ohio and the three- to four-hour radius. This is just another part of that, just to show how important that is."

Before presentations from first-year co-defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley and offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson respectively dissected defensive back techniques and balancing an offense, Ohio State honored three of its four Ohio's Finest award winners, from the high school and collegiate levels. After brief speeches from Cincinnati St. Xavier's Steve Specht and Cleveland Glenville's Ted Ginn Sr., the two head coaches honored as longtime scholastic leaders, former Buckeyes wide receiver (2004-06) and veteran NFL playmaker (2007-present) Ted Ginn Jr. spoke.

Heading into his third year with the New Orleans Saints, Ginn Jr. reflected on the road he took to a pro career about to

reach its 13th season.

"This is important for me," Ginn Jr. said. "Not only because of what it stands for, but what my dad did for me. I'm a product of him and what he stands for and what you guys are trying to do. Continue to be who you are, continue to learn, teach your kids and thank you for this award."

After chalk talk, which broke out position groups with Ohio State coaches on white boards with quality control staffers, graduate assistants and interns breaking down X's and O's to the high school contingent, a social hour of beer and wings capped the first night.

The clinic resumed April 12 after the Buckeyes' practice, a walkthrough before the April 13 spring game at Ohio Stadium, which started on the outdoor fields despite rainy weather.

Coaches watched the two-hour morning practice before presentations started around 11 a.m. on the indoor field with special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes and longtime Wittenberg head coach Joe Fincham.

After the sessions, with Barnes breaking down how special teams performances translate to offensive/defensive development and Fincham delving into building offensive line men from the ground up, athletic director Gene Smith introduced Day, who spoke about how to organize a game plan. Smith called Day a "great father, great husband and damn good football coach" before the head coach detailed offensive philosophies.

Day's talk was followed by the clinic's featured guest speaker, Boston College seventh-year head coach Steve Addazio, who spoke on using the bunch package to conflict opposing defenses.

Day worked under Addazio as the offensive coordinator/wide receivers coach at Temple (2012) and offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach with the Eagles (2013-14).

"He brings the juice every day," Day

said of Addazio. "I learned that from him."

Addazio's ties run deep in Columbus. He first crossed paths with Day in 2005 at Florida, where the former was the Gators' offensive line coach and the latter was a graduate assistant under Meyer (2005-09). Addazio's son, Louie, spent the past three years (2016-19) as a graduate assistant with Ohio State's offensive line before becoming Bowling Green's tight ends coach in December.

"Ohio State's very fortunate to have Ryan Day," Addazio said after Day introduced him. "I was watching Ryan up here, and I was so freaking proud of him."

Presentations by Buckeye assistants picked up afterward with sixth-year defensive line coach Larry Johnson lecturing on enhancing players "the Rushmen way" while fourth-year offensive line coach Greg Studrawa shared insight into offensive line fundamentals, which included videos of workouts with heavy medicine balls translating to movements in the trenches.

During those speeches on the indoor field, Focus 3 founder and OSU leadership consultant Tim Kight held a session in the team room discussing "the edge ... where elite happens."

The afternoon closed with second-year wide receivers coach Brian Hartline breaking down route running and first-year linebackers coach Al Washington analyzing "the art of confrontation" in defeating blocks for a defense's front seven.

Once the day – which included an Ohio's Finest award at the pro level for former Ohio State (1984-87) and NFL (1988-97) linebacker Chris Spielman – ended, the clinic wrapped April 13 before the spring game with a weight room and football movement session from 9-11 a.m.

"It's just about spending some time and making sure they understand how important they are to us," Day said of the coaches and the clinic.

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Punter Proposes To Girlfriend During Spring Game



OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

POPPED THE QUESTION – Junior punter Drue Chrisman surprised his girlfriend, Avery Eliason, with a well thought-out proposal at halftime of Ohio State's spring game on April 13.

By **ANDREW LIND**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State's spring game is little more than a glorified practice, but redshirt junior punter Drue Chrisman was more nervous that afternoon than he's ever been on a football field.

"I didn't have the best day punting, but my heart was beating," said Chrisman, who punted three times for 131 yards (43.7 average).

That's because Chrisman – who may be even better known for flipping water bottles upright on social media than flipping the field with his booming kicks – had another impressive trick up his sleeve.

Chrisman brought his girlfriend, Avery Eliason, onto the field at halftime for what she thought would be a kicking contest against the girlfriend of former Ohio State kicker Sean Nuernberger. But just as she went to kick the ball, Chrisman – who was already on one knee as the holder – stopped her and grabbed a box with an engagement ring inside.

"I knew she was the one, it was just a matter of getting down on my knee and doing it," Chrisman said. "This is the greatest venue I could have done it in, and she didn't find out. Everybody else knew, but she didn't. I am surprised I pulled it off, honestly."

When she saw the ring, Eliason held her hands to her face in disbelief. And when she finally said "yes" and jumped into Chrisman's arms, the entire team mobbed the couple.

"I don't even think I heard her say it," Chrisman said. "I blacked out a little, I'm not going to lie. It was sort of an out-of-body experience. It was incredible."

"She had no idea. She just walked out there thinking she was going to kick a ball, and honestly, I think she was more relieved she didn't have to kick a ball. It worked out perfectly. I couldn't think of a better place to do it than in Ohio Stadium, with the history behind the stadium."

Chrisman and Eliason grew up as neighbors in Cincinnati but didn't start dating until about one year ago.

"He's the love of my life, seriously," said Eliason, who attends Brigham Young University but may soon be transferring to Ohio State. "I've known him since we were little. We grew up together, and we've just been through so much. I'm just so happy. I was not expecting this."

The proposal had been in the works for weeks and included conversations with Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith, head coach Ryan Day and the university's compliance department.

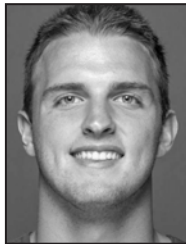
"Let's just say I feel a lot lighter right now," Chrisman said. "It's been building up over the last week. For the coaches and everybody to allow me to do that, it's just a privilege, to be honest."

Day was especially supportive of the proposal, which drew a loud roar from the 61,102 people in attendance.

"He was all on board," Chrisman said of his coach. "It was funny. Right before we did it, he was like, 'Give me the details so I know what I'm doing.' He was awesome."

The couple does not have a wedding date set just yet, but Chrisman anticipates it will happen around this time next year. Maybe it, too, will be in Ohio Stadium.

"Maybe," Chrisman said. "That would be something."



Drue Chrisman

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

New Co-DC Greg Mattison Looks Good In Red

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When first-year head coach Ryan Day took over at Ohio State on Jan. 2 and decided to overhaul the entire defensive coaching staff save defensive line coach Larry Johnson, perhaps the most important hire was co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison.

Mattison came to Columbus with 47 years of coaching experience, including spending the past eight years at archrival Michigan. He served as defensive line coach during the past four seasons after four as defensive coordinator (2011-14).

Prior to his stint in Ann Arbor, Mich., Mattison was the defensive coordinator of the Baltimore Ravens for two seasons after coaching linebackers in his first year in the NFL. Before Baltimore, Mattison coached at a litany of FBS programs, including Florida, Notre Dame, Michigan, Texas A&M, Navy, Western Michigan, Northwestern and Cornell.

It was at Florida on Urban Meyer's staff where Mattison met a young Ryan Day, who impressed him from the start.

"When you've coached as long as I have, you get a lot of people that come through the door," Mattison said, "and there are some of them, you look at them, you go, 'Really?' I remember him the first day, I remember him the first time he came in there, and I went, 'Where's this guy from? Where's this kid from?' And somebody said, and I said, 'Man, he's so mature, he's so way ahead of his time.'

"I would run into him over the years after that and see what he's done and where he's gone. 'You're in the NFL now? I believe that. I see that.' Then, when he went here, and I went, 'Yeah, Urban (Meyer) doesn't make many mistakes now. That doesn't surprise me a bit.'"

Mattison and Day developed a great amount of respect for one another while coaching together in Gainesville, Fla., and so when Day was constructing his staff, he knew whom he wanted to bring in.

"First off, he's a great man, great husband, great dad, kind of has that mentor feel where you look to him for advice," Day said of Mattison, who turns 70 years old in November. "He's been around a long time, seen a lot of football, a lot of wisdom, and I felt like that was important to have. He's done that. He's somebody that the guys look to with a lot of respect, where he's been, who he's coached, what he's done.

"When he speaks, people listen. And I think that for everybody on defense, the staff and for the players, they look to him as kind of a steadying force there, someone they can grab onto. So when we had an opportunity to get him, that was important for us."

While Mattison is one of the most experienced coaches in the nation, he was not brought in just because he has been around a while. His defenses have been effective, particularly at disrupting offenses' rhythm and pressuring quarterbacks.

"He definitely wanted us to be able to play the kind of defense that he's seen me be associated with," Mattison said of why Day hired him. "It's pretty evident with Larry that it always started up front. You want to be a very physical team against the run and you want to be a pressure team, whether it's a pressure with a four-man rush or it's a pressure with blitzing, or whatever. But you want to not let quarterbacks

sit back there and feel pretty good about themselves."

Mattison coached four consecutive defensive-line units at Michigan that helped the team rank in the top five nationally in total defense and pass defense. When he was the Wolverines' defensive coordinator from 2011-14, his defenses ranked among the top 20 in the country in total defense, pass defense and scoring defense in three of those four years.

Having had success defending the pass in the past, Mattison believes in switching up coverages as opposed to playing strictly man coverage, which Ohio State had done previously.

"I believe in really sound defensive football that you can do, whether you're in the NFL, whether you're wherever coaching," Mattison said. "I think that means you've got to be able to play an eight-man front at times, you've got to be able to play man (coverage) at times, you've got to be able to play zone and you've got to be able to pressure."

While Mattison has enjoyed success at every level, he emphasized the importance of using a strategy that fits the strengths of the players instead of forcing a scheme on the wrong personnel.

"All of those (schemes) depend, really, on the type of players you have," Mattison said. "It's never been schemes that have won. It's what you teach the players to run and then who's running them. And I've been really, really impressed with our players. They are so willing to do whatever you're asking them to do, and they're so into trying to be the best they can be.

"I think there's a set (of) things. If you looked at NFL teams, if you looked anywhere, you'd say, 'Yeah, they do this, they do this, they do this. Good teams do this.' And that's what we're trying to do."

Mattison is thrilled to be a part of the Scarlet and Gray. He said he is very fortunate to be a part of such a great defensive staff, which includes Johnson, co-defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley, assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes and fellow former Wolverine and linebackers coach Al Washington.

The Ohio State defensive staff is loaded with experienced coaches, coming from various backgrounds. Although Mattison said there are not any egos getting in the way, it can still be a daunting task to guide his staff's ideas toward one common goal.

"That's my job," Mattison said. "I think, when you're a coordinator, that's what the word coordinator means. It means coordinate great peoples' ideas. That's what it is. A coordinator, to me, has never been a guy that comes in and says, 'You're going to do this, this, this, this, this. Listen to me and let's do it.'"

"A coordinator's a guy that coordinates other people's ideas and coordinates other ways of doing things, and being a co-coordinator with Jeff, that's what we do. And that's why we're very happy and lucky or fortunate to have such a good staff, to be able to give you that."

From a coaching perspective, Mattison transitioned well, especially considering he left Michigan for its archrival. Some of his former players razzed him, saying they never thought they'd see him in red. The energetic veteran coach responded with a smile.

"Well, that's funny because my wife says she thinks I look really, really good in red," Mattison said.



TIM MOODY

TRADED IN HIS COLORS – After more than a decade at Michigan, Ohio State co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison is happy to be in Columbus.

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Transition From Meyer To Day Appears Seamless

It's funny to hear some of the reactions from fans after spring football is concluded.

They'll make judgments about players, decide that a certain offensive set doesn't work, that some guys are overhyped, that numbers actually mean something.

Spring is about evaluation, about getting guys acclimated and understanding the playbook. It's about getting new coaches on the same page so that the breakdowns that happened the previous season don't show up again. And it's also about – at least this spring, at Ohio State – putting a new stamp on the program.

Ryan Day is in charge now, and he certainly hasn't withered under the early pressure. He says all of the right things, definitely is involved in the offense and will do some coaching and teaching on the sidelines. He is kind of the anti-Urban Meyer, which means no doubled-over, hands on knees, a spring waiting to uncoil after every poor play. Day is calm – at least outwardly – and doesn't give the appearance of someone who will be overwhelmed by the moment.

That said, there's a big difference between coaching 'em up in April against guys they know than against Nebraska on the road in late September.

While it's difficult to make any kind of blanket declarations, a few things appeared evident in OSU's final spring practice: The Buckeyes will play fast and loose on defense.

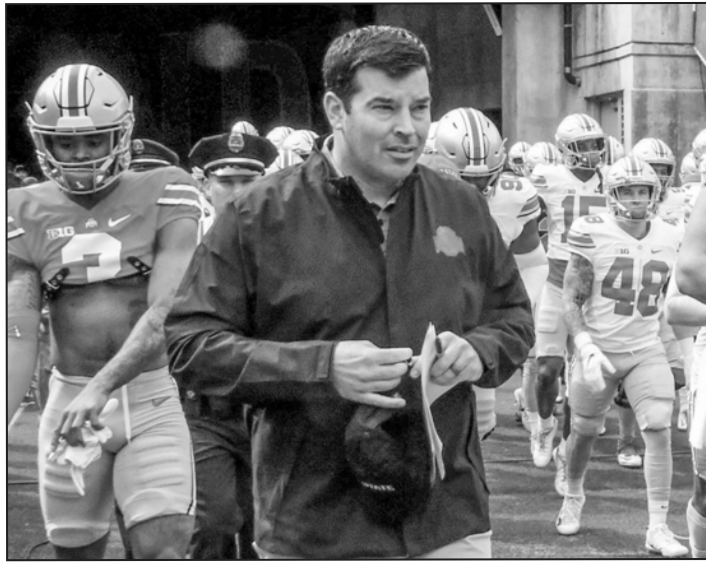
THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

A diverse scheme doesn't help anyone if players can't get lined up properly, and Ohio State had that far too often last year. Greg Schiano's NFL concepts were often hard to grasp and resulted in far too many explosive plays being given up. The talk this spring has been to pare down the playbook to basic concepts and letting the athletes do what they do – fly to the football and make things happen.

That has to be welcome news for a guy like Malik Harrison, who didn't really find his stride until late in the season. A tough, long, fast linebacker, Harrison was misused early in the year when he was asked to check Purdue's Rondale Moore. That's a bad matchup for anyone, and why Schiano and the staff felt it would work is puzzling. We know what happened in that game, as Moore balled out and Purdue effectively killed Ohio State's chances at making the College Football Playoff.

The linebackers will be under the microscope this fall, so having Harrison back is a big plus. Add to that young, burgeoning stars in Teradja Mitchell and Dallas Gant – two guys who, in a perfect world, would be starting – and the group has a real chance to shine.

The secondary also took its share of criticism in 2018, lacking the star power it has shown for most of the century. There were no Marshon Lattimore or Malik Hookers or Denzel Wards back there, and teams took advantage of that. Too many blown coverages, as a result of too many coaches, spelled doom for the Buckeye



SONNY BROCKWAY

HIS TEAM – Ryan Day walks onto the field before his first spring game as Ohio State's head coach.

secondary.

That's why it's nice to see one guy leading the entire unit. Co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley brings NFL credentials to the defensive backs room, and his responsibilities have been streamlined as he is coaching everyone with special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes. There is no specific safeties coach or corners coach, which means there will be less chance of getting messages mixed up.

This could be a big season for corner Jeffrey Okudah, who flashed late in the year and at least has the look of a shutdown corner. Add in Jordan Fuller, Shaun Wade and Brendon White, and you have the makings of a suddenly lethal secondary. There is also depth, in the form of Amir Riep, who shone in the spring game, and Jahsen Wint, who looked lost last season but seems to have had the light turn on under Hafley's guidance.

With no live tackling it was hard to truly get a handle on how good the pass rush was, but most people know that Chase Young should be among the most feared quarterback chasers in America. Tyreke Smith showed some outstanding get-off, and Noah Potter flashed quite a bit, too. Zach Harrison oozes athleticism, and once he gets bigger he could be a Bosa-like force.

Some may accuse me of burying the lead because it's only now that the quarterbacks will be brought up. Fans love them some QBs, even more so when replacing someone who was as special as Dwayne Haskins was in 2018.

Justin Fields brought all kinds of hype to Columbus after transferring from Georgia and arrived as the highest-rated QB recruit in the history of the program. He was behind only Clemson's Trevor Lawrence among freshman quarterbacks last year, and all Lawrence did was pilot the Tigers to a national championship. Fields isn't quite the same passer but can be a handful with his legs.

According to Day, Fields is immersing

himself in the playbook and picking it up surprisingly fast. Fields' spring game stats – 4 of 13 – don't catch the eye at all, but actually watching the game showed that there were only two really poor passes. There were a couple of drops, a couple of well-placed balls that were knocked away at the last moment and couple of overthrows. But there was also a pretty touchdown toss to Ben Victor that officially went for 98 yards, but which covered about 45 yards in the air and was placed perfectly over the shoulder. I am not all that worried about Fields.

We know what J.K. Dobbins can do, though his production slipped last year as he added a little weight and saw his role reduced with a healthy Mike Weber sharing the workload. Dobbins seems to have the hunger back, which could be bad news for the rest of the Big Ten. Master Teague and Marcus Crowley each showed a nice power component and could fit into a short-yardage package. Both will play.

The another storyline of the offseason was the loss of receivers Parris Campbell, Terry McLaurin and Johnnie Dixon. Many wonder who will pick up the slack as K.J. Hill is the only truly productive returnee from 2018. Just because the receiving corps is short on experience doesn't mean that it will be a liability in the fall. Austin Mack and Ben Victor have been around awhile, and though neither has been consistent, the ability is there. C.J. Saunders has received praise as a leader and should be in the mix at times. If the spring game is any indication, Jaalen Gill should fill Campbell's H-back role quite well. He's shifty in space and explosive in the open field.

And then there's Garrett Wilson.

Folks, as one who is usually in "prove it" mode when it comes to ultra-hyped players, it takes a lot to impress me. So touting Wilson as a star already may seem a bit premature – but the kid has that "it" factor, that something that's hard to quantify. It's just there.

He made a great leaping touchdown

catch in the second quarter, a catch that he has been reportedly making routinely in practice. Wilson has outstanding hands, doesn't let the ball get to his body, and has a frame that will be difficult to bring down on first contact. He doesn't have world-class speed, but he's fast enough to be a playmaker.

While he may not begin the season among the Buckeyes' top three receivers, he will be on the field a lot, especially when they go to "10" personnel (one RB, four WR). I would not be shocked if he led the team in touchdown catches in 2019, nor if he proves himself to be the top freshman receiver in the country.

With attrition and injuries and the game format ruling the day, the offensive line was hard to grade. It will be interesting to follow the progress of guard Wyatt Davis, who seems to be on the fast track to stardom, and the weight and strength gain of Nicholas Petit-Frere, who came into the program last year with all kinds of hype but barely played. Now bigger and stronger, he should be right in the mix for one of the starting tackle spots. The Buckeyes will get a boost from Rutgers graduate transfer Jonah Jackson, an all-league type who will be in for fall camp. He has experience and nastiness, two things that are huge for offensive linemen.

Offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson has talked about how the coaching staff wants to involve the tight ends more and take advantage of the athleticism of Jeremy Ruckert and Luke Farrell. Forgive me if I'm not buying. We've heard this year after year after year, that this will finally be the season when tight end will be incorporated into the offense. Then the leader at the end of the season has 12 catches. The talent is there – let's see if the coaches are true to their word, or if it's merely another season of lip service.

With spring practice in the books, it's now time for the players to decide just how great they want to be. Are they in the weight room when they're supposed to be? Are they gathering together to work on things without the prompting of coaches? Are they getting the intricacies of the playbook? These things will go a long way in determining what kind of season the Buckeyes have.

The talent is there for a return to the CFP, but the offensive turnover and the newness of the coaching staff should bring a little bit of pause. So far Oklahoma's Lincoln Riley is the only guy to take over a blue-blood program and not hit a speed bump. The Sooners are 2 for 2 in CFP appearances under Riley, so the hope is that Day aspires to be that good, because man for man the Buckeyes are better than the Sooners.

Facing Florida Atlantic and Cincinnati in non-conference play, as well as the aforementioned journey to Lincoln, Neb., will force this young Ohio State team to grow up fast. Fans will know pretty quickly whether the transition from Meyer to Day is seamless or whether there are some growing pains.

One thing that is a certainty – those fans will weigh in with their thoughts immediately if something isn't going right.

In that regard, spring practice may be more like the regular season than we realize.

Difficult To Learn Much From Day's 1st Spring Game

I would love to be making astute evaluations of the Ohio State football team in this space, following the annual spring game played April 13, but it is kind of hard for me to do so given the no-tackling format of the scrimmage. I am sure the coaches can break down the tape of the game and evaluate the things they have to evaluate, but for those of us less sophisticated viewers, I must say, the format was kind of disappointing.

The health and improvement of the team is first and foremost for Ryan Day and his staff, as well it should be. But I am sure the 61,102 Buckeye fans in attendance, as well as our media types looking for insight, would have liked to see something more along the lines of game conditions. I keep thinking back to a picture I referenced in this space last issue from reprints we posted on the electronic BuckeyeSports.com as part of Reprint Thursdays. It showed a punishing hit put on quarterback John Wagoner by linebacker John Kacherski during John Cooper's first spring game back in 1988. Coop gave the then-unheard of spring crowd of 54,302 their money's worth that day.

The ideal format in my book to balance the health and well-being of the team with an effort to reward Buckeye fans with a good show would be to make the quarterbacks off-limits and have the rest of the team block and tackle as they would in a regular game. Remember, for many fans the spring game is the only time they can afford to attend a game in Ohio Stadium. It is also a chance for parents to take young fans to enjoy the pageantry of Ohio Stadium football at something way less than \$75 or more a ticket. Give the fans something more than seeing TBDBITL and Drue Chrisman proposing to his intended.

With my rant over, I did not learn as much as I would have liked about quarterbacks Justin Fields, in particular, and Matthew Baldwin. Again, it was hard to tell in that format, especially for Fields who was "sacked" four times but might easily have escaped if the action were live.

I would say both QBs have a long way to go, but I was impressed with Fields' running ability. He showed great quickness as he turned the corner on a five-yard touchdown run in the second quarter and then broke free on what was recorded as a 30-yard run with the patty-cake rules in the third quarter but might have been a 65-yard scoring scamper in live action. His running ability might signal a return to a more traditional Ohio State offense next season, ideally retaining some of Day's passing frills.

Sadly, his passing was just 4 of 13, and even his signature throw of the day, a 98-yard scoring pass to Binjimen Victor, was underthrown, which might have been a problem in a real game against a top-notch secondary.

The big winner on offense may have been Garrett Wilson, who attracted attention during his recruitment because of his high rankings and was getting rave reviews coming out of spring drills. He didn't disappoint with a high-light-reel touchdown catch among his four catches for 44 yards.

While Wilson had the catch of the day, it seemed that Baldwin was frequently targeting Jaalen Gill, which says to me that either the coaches wanted passes going his way or he was getting open more often than other receivers. Gill, a redshirt freshman from nearby Westerville (Ohio) South, led all receivers with seven catches for 95 yards.

Probably the one player on the team with the least to prove this spring was running back J.K. Dobbins, who barely worked up a sweat in the contest played in football-friendly 61-degree

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

weather. He carried just three times for nine yards and had a catch for another seven.

His comfortable seat on the bench gave two of the primary contenders for backup carries a chance to shine. Master Teague looked especially strong in the third quarter, when he followed Fields' long run with a 17-yard run and a 22-yard scoring jaunt, finishing the afternoon with 75 yards on seven carries. Freshman early enrollee Marcus Crowley added 50 yards on 10 carries. Both backs would have had even stronger stat lines if defenders had been forced to tackle them.

Perhaps my biggest take from the scrimmage was the improved play of the much-maligned defensive secondary and the play of the even more maligned safety Jahsen Wint, who had a pair of interceptions. The Scarlet and Gray squads combined to complete just 29 of 64 passes for a paltry 45.3 passing percentage. The defensive backs seemed to keep the pass plays in front of them, in contrast to plays last season where they were often spotted chasing receivers, frequently with their backs to the ball.

I give high early marks to the new defensive coaching regime.

On a side note, given the nice weather, a new head coach and a new, highly touted quarterback, I thought the attendance for the spring game would be higher, though it was a big jump from the 47,803 that showed up last spring. Ohio State drew 81,112 for Urban Meyer's first spring game and had crowds of 99,391 in 2015, after the national championship, and 100,189 in 2016 before dropping to 80,134 in 2017 with roughly 20,000 seats out of commission. That was still good enough to lead the country in spring attendance.

Tressel's First Spring Game

Jim Tressel's first spring game was played before just 22,892, but that was actually a sell-out as the game was played in soccer's Crew Stadium. Ohio Stadium was in the midst of a major renovation. The game was featured as part of our Reprint Thursdays on the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, with stories from the May 12, 2001, issue of BSB.

Tressel had a returning starter at quarterback that first season in senior Steve Bellisari but apparently was not completely sold on the veteran signal-caller, taking a long look at some of his other options that spring. Passing was definitely featured in the spring game. Bellisari, Scott McMullen, Craig Krenzel and Rick McFadden all saw plenty of action.

Bellisari didn't hurt his cause, posting one of the better lines by completing 11 of 17 passes for 122 yards and two touchdowns and no interceptions. McFadden, a redshirt freshman, also opened some eyes while hitting nine of his 13 passes for 90 yards and a score without an interception.

But it was the quarterback with the worst stats who may have stolen the show and given Buckeye fans a glimpse of what was coming in the very near future. Krenzel was just 3 of 10 for 70 yards, a score and an interception, but he engineered a 15-point fourth-quarter comeback to give his Scarlet a 22-21 victory. Krenzel hit Chris Vance from 21 yards out for one score with 5:35 left and then scored on a four-yard run with 1:05 to play to secure the win.

A little over a year later, he would start the Buckeyes on their magical run to the 2002 national championship.

"I'm sure that makes Craig feel good about himself and makes his teammates feel good about him," Tressel said after the late-game heroics that Krenzel would ultimately become known for. "I mentioned before the game that I thought Craig had his best practice of the year (four days before the spring game). He stepped up on the goal line and scored a big touchdown there, and today he did it again."

Bellisari, who had compiled a 13-9 record in two seasons as the starting QB, admitted he heard the noise but said he was going to soldier on.

"The only thing I can control is how I play football," he said. "I hear (criticism) all the time. You can't avoid it. It's everywhere. You can't tell me that any other quarterback in the country, when he has a bad day, he is not going to get ripped on."

As for the renovation project that drove the Buckeyes east to Crew Stadium, it involved the construction of a mammoth new press box, as well as more than two dozen new suites just below the press level.

Stories from the 2001 spring game are archived on BuckeyeSports.com for your information and enjoyment. The next Reprint Thursday will feature stories from BSB covering Meyer's first spring game in 2012. The stories will be posted on April 18.

If you are not already enjoying the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all current BSB subscribers, see the simple instruction on page 5 of this issue or call (614) 486-2202.

Back To The Banquet

After a two-year absence for different reasons, I attended the Ohio State Scholar-Athlete Banquet, an event I have been attending since 1984, held this year at the Ohio Union on April 10. A staggering 674 student-athletes were honored for their work in the classroom.

Looking back at the story I wrote covering the '84 banquet, a modest 160 athletes were recognized. It was a big year for Buckeyes tight end John Frank, who won the Big Ten Medal of Honor, the conference's most prestigious award, as well as the John T. Sr. and Hulda E. Edwards Graduate Award, which came with a stipend for graduate school.

This capped quite the year for Frank, who was named Academic All-American for the second straight year, won postgraduate scholarships from both the NCAA and the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame and was named one of the NCAA's top five student-athletes, the governing body's highest honor.

Shortly before the banquet, Frank had been selected by the San Francisco 49ers in the second round of the NFL draft after completing his Ohio State career as the second leading receiver in Buckeye history. Frank would go on to a five-year career with the 49ers, which included a pair of Super Bowl victories, before turning to a career in medicine.

Kelly Robinson of the women's basketball team was the women's Medal of Honor winner.

Through the years, the scholar list continued to grow. As the number of scholar-athletes increased, the banquet started to drag on and on. Originally, each scholar-athlete got to come

up and say a few words. That was reduced to just having each team come to the front of the room and all names called out. But the banquet was still long, despite efforts to keep it moving, a by-product of Ohio State's academic success.

In my two-year absence, the banquet was radically altered to cut it down to a manageable length. This is hard for me to say, but I actually think that now they have made it too short, with each athlete no longer named and bios of major award winners radically reduced. Just one man's opinion.

I want to thank Ohio State assistant rowing coach Anna Goodale and members of her team for their gracious camaraderie, as I was seated at their table. It was a bit of an honor to sit with Goodale because she was a gold medal winner with the U.S. rowing team at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, a fact that one of her team members had to point out to me after Goodale seemed too modest to bring it up herself.

That is the second time I was seated with an Olympian at the scholar-athlete banquet. I also dined with former Ohio State runner and coach Robert Gary, who competed in the steeplechase at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece. I admit it. I am a little starstruck by Olympic athletes. That puts them at the pinnacle of their sport.

The banquet gave me a chance to catch up with Ms. Joann Grimes, mother of the late Leann Grimes-Davidge, whose memory is honored with a major award at the banquet. Ms. Grimes is one of Buckeye Sports Bulletin's most loyal readers, and we have become friends through the years by meeting annually at the banquet. The Grimes and Davidge families are tremendous supporters of the banquet, OSU athletics and academics. Bill Davidge, Leann's husband, frequently serves as master of ceremonies. Davidge, who played hockey at Ohio State, was absent from this year's affair while he tended to his day job as an analyst for the Columbus Blue Jackets, who were in Tampa, Fla., taking care of their Stanley Cup business. Paul Keels, the voice of the Buckeyes, ably filled in as emcee.

A 1984 scholar-athlete banquet trivia question: If Frank was the second all-time leading receiver at Ohio State with 121 catches upon his graduation, who was the all-time leader at the time with 154?

Passages

I am saddened to note the sudden passing of Margaret Repko, mother of former BSB editor Jeff Svoboda on April 8, at the age of 63. "She was my biggest booster and dedicated her life to making sure I could be whatever I wanted to be," Svoboda said in a Facebook post. "I wouldn't be who I am without her."

The thoughts of the entire BSB staff go out to Jeff and his family.

Trivia Answer

Gary Williams was Ohio State's all-time receptions leader with 154 catches from 1979-82. The Wilmington, Ohio, product led the Buckeyes in receiving in 1981 (50) and 1982 (40). His 50 catches were second most in a season to Billy Anders' 55 in 1966. Frank had the next two highest seasons with 45 in 1981 and '83.

Although I initially guessed Williams as the all-time leader in career receptions, I got it in my mind that he played until 1984, so I switched my guess to Doug Donley, who was actually fourth with 106, behind Williams, Frank and Anders (108).

The marks of the above mentioned players were all quickly overshadowed with the arrival of Cris Carter for the 1984 season.