

Powerful Running Game Becomes OSU Calling Card

# Buckeyes March Past Washington State

By Mark Rea

With the exception of a few new wrinkles, it was pretty much another day at the office for Ohio State as the Buckeyes clicked off another victory, this one a 33-19 vanquishing of Washington State Sept. 21 in Ohio Stadium.

As has become their trademark so far this season, the Buckeyes used a powerful running attack and blasted the opposing team off the line of scrimmage time after time.

In their first two victories over Arizona and Louisville, the Bucks had totaled 325 and 170 yards rushing, respectively. Against the Cougars, they piled up 321 more, giving them 816 for the season and an average of 272.0 per game.

If Woody Hayes were still around, he would almost certainly approve of Ohio State's offensive attack, even though the Bucks have improved on the old coach's favorite axiom — this year's Buckeyes are averaging 4.8 yards and a cloud of dust.

While junior quarterback Kirk Herbstreit's start in place of the injured Kent Graham got most of the media attention, the stable of thoroughbreds in the OSU backfield continued to march along.

Senior tailback Carlos Snow, sophomore tailback Butler Býnoté and senior fullback Scottie Graham all rushed for 80 yards or more. The trio combined for 270 yards on 41 carries.

Snow ground out 97 yards on 18 carries, giving him 2,317 yards in his OSU career and pushing him past Pete Johnson (2,308, 1973-76) into seventh place on the school's all-time rushing chart.

Býnoté padded his team-leading rushing total with 90 yards in 18 carries. He now has 327 yards for the season, nearly 100 more than he had all of last year.

And Graham showed the form he had two years ago when he gained almost 1,000 yards for the Buckeyes, picking up 83 yards on just five carries. He had the longest run of the day, a 65-yard bolt straight up the middle.

The Buckeyes' depth at running back has been so great that there simply aren't enough footballs to go around.

Sophomore fullback Jeff Cothran, who entered the game against Washington State averaging 9.8 yards per carry, touched the football only once, gaining four yards.

Sophomore tailback Raymont Harris continues to look for work. He carried only once for three yards against the Cougars and has just 10 carries on the season.

Nevertheless, the Buckeyes are still managing to win games. They are now 3-0 for the first time in six seasons and will have a week off before starting Big Ten play against Wisconsin Oct. 5.

The defense should welcome the week of rest, especially after chasing Washington State quarterback Drew Bledsoe and his receivers all over the field.

As advertised, Bledsoe was never afraid to put the ball in the air and he did so 43 times, completing 26 of his attempts for 287 yards. He might have had more attempts, but the Buckeyes' defense got to him for nine sacks, four of them by sophomore outside linebacker Jason Simmons.



Ohio State sophomore tailback Butler Býnoté sails over the goal line for the Buckeyes' final touchdown of the day, a score which increased an 11-point lead to 18 with only 8:20 left in the fourth quarter. Býnoté had another excellent day in the OSU backfield, rushing 18 times for 90 yards. He is currently the team leader in rushing with 327 yards and four touchdowns.

Ohio State's defense surrendered 449 total yards to Washington State, the largest total it has given up in nearly two years, but much of it came between the 20-yard lines.

The Cougars couldn't seem to punch the ball in the end zone, getting only one touchdown in the game's first 59 minutes and then having to run their two-minute drill to tally a second in the final minute of the game against much of OSU's second-team defense.

Bledsoe outgunned Herbstreit in the passing stats, but Herbstreit played an excellent game in his first start for the Buckeyes. He completed eight of 13 passes for 158 yards and one touchdown. He also added 41 yards to the team's rushing total.

What he added in heart was immeasurable, especially on the team's first series.

The OSU defense snuffed Washington State on three downs, but punter Jason Hanson blasted a 54-yarder that pinned the Buckeyes back at their own 15-yard line.

Herbstreit bolted into the game and the Buckeyes immediately started clicking. Snow broke clear off right tackle on the first play for 13 yards and two plays later Herbstreit completed his first pass attempt, hooking up with sophomore tight end Cedric Saunders on a 20-yard play.

Graham softened up the Cougars defense on two more running plays before Herbstreit executed a perfect play fake, stepped to his right, stopped and lofted a perfect pass to a streaking

## OHIO STATE vs. WASHINGTON ST.

AT A GLANCE

**PLAY OF THE GAME:** With 4:14 left in the first quarter, Washington State was driving near midfield, on its way to a possible tying touchdown. WSU quarterback Drew Bledsoe tried to hit split end Calvin Schexnayder on a quick out pattern, but OSU safety Roger Harper made an interception and raced 43 yards for a touchdown. The play gave the Buckeyes a two-touchdown cushion early in the contest, and although there were more than three quarters left to play, Washington State got no closer than 12 points the rest of the way.

**OFFENSIVE PERFORMERS:** OSU: TB Carlos Snow, 18 carries, 97 yards, 5.4 avg., 1 TD; TB Butler Býnoté, 18 carries, 90 yards, 5.0 avg., 1 TD; FB Scottie Graham, 5 carries, 83 yards, 16.6 avg., 0 TDs; QB Kirk Herbstreit, 8 completions, 13 attempts, 158 yards, 1 TD, 1 int., 6 carries, 41 yards, 6.8 avg., 0 TDs; FB Bernard Edwards, 4 receptions, 93 yards, 23.3 avg., 1 TD; TE Cedric Saunders, 2 receptions, 47 yards, 23.5 avg., 0 TDs. WASHINGTON STATE: QB Drew Bledsoe, 26 completions, 43 attempts, 287 yards, 1 TD, 1 int.; RB Shaumbe Wright-Fair, 34 carries, 106 yards, 4.4 avg., 0 TDs, 5 receptions, 39 yards, 7.8 avg., 0 TDs; WR Phillip Bibo 6 receptions, 101 yards, 16.8 avg., 0 TDs; TE Clarence Williams, 5 receptions, 52 yards, 10.4 avg., 0 TDs.

**DEFENSIVE PERFORMERS:** OSU: SS Roger Harper, 12 tackles, 2 for loss, 1 sack, 1 interception return for TD; NG Greg Smith, 10 tackles, 1 for loss, 1 sack, 1 fumble recovery; CB Tim Walton, 10 tackles; ILB Steve Tovar, 8 tackles, 2 for loss, 1 sack, 1 interception return of PAT try for two-point score; CB Foster Paulk, 8 tackles; DT Rich Primm, 8 tackles; OLB John Kacherski, 7 tackles, 2 for loss, 1 sack; OLB Jason Simmons, 6 tackles, 4 sacks. WASHINGTON STATE: FB John Rushing, 19 tackles, 12 mins, 7 assists; OLB Lewis Bush, 11 tackles, 1 for loss, 1 sack, 1 pass broken up; CB Torey Hunter, 8 tackles; DT Chris Frank, 8 tackles; SS Singer Mobley, 2 tackles, 1 interception.

**INJURY REPORT:** TE Jeff Ellis, who suffered a knee injury in practice before the WSU game, is listed as week-to-week. WR Chris Sanders suffered a knee injury in practice and had arthroscopic surgery. He should be sidelined about three weeks. QB Kent Graham (concussion, shoulder separation) should return against Wisconsin. WR Aaron Payne (broken wrist) could return in time for the Wisconsin game.

**NEXT OPPONENT:** The Buckeyes will take Sept. 28 off and then be back in action Oct. 5 to open the Big Ten season against Wisconsin. The game is set for 1:30 p.m. in Ohio Stadium. Should OSU win that game, it would win its Big Ten opener for the first time since 1987.

### TWO DEEP VS. COUGARS

POSITION	NAME	NAME
WR	STABLEIN	GALLOWAY
LT	KLINK	DOLLY
LG	HARTMAN	BEAN
C	LONG	THURSH
RG	MONNOT	KLMBITH
RT	WINHOW	RHOAP
TE	SAUNDERS	LAJTE
FL	EDWARDS	DUPPTEIRD
QB	HERBSTREIT	PICKENS
TB	SNOW	BÝNOTÉ
FB	GRAHAM	COTHRAN
PK	T.WILLIAMS	BERGER
DEFENSE	M.WILLIAMS	GIRD
DT	FIMMEL	R.BROWN
NG	G.SMITH	REICHMAN
DE	SPILLMAN	FOSTER
OLB	KACHERSKI	SIMMONS
ILB	HERMAN	LEAGE
ILB	TOVAR	R.JOHNSON
OLB	PAULK	KOENIG
FB	NELSON	PATILLO
CB	HARPER	TAYLOR
LB	COOK	WALTON
P	T.WILLIAMS	KIRKELL

Bernard Edwards, who had beaten his man by five yards. Edwards went into the end zone untouched, completing the 39-yard play, and the Buckeyes quickly had a 7-0 lead.

When they got the ball back, the Bucks stayed with their ground attack. Mixing straight off-tackle plays and sweeps in with Herbstreit's expertise at the option, OSU moved to near midfield but was forced to punt.

Bledsoe started passing to get the Cougars back downfield and completed one to tight end Clarence Williams for 18 yards. But when the Cougar quarterback tried to get some quick yardage on a quick out pattern to split end Calvin Schexnayder, the Buckeye defense made him pay.

Sophomore strong safety Roger Harper stepped in front of Schexnayder, intercepted the pass and raced 42 yards for the touchdown. Harper's theft and run was the first OSU interception return of a touchdown since David Brown ran one back 43 yards in the 1989 Wisconsin game, and it put the Buckeyes ahead 14-0.

The interception return was only part of a big game played by Harper. He collected a career-high 12 tackles, including two for loss and one sack. He is now third on the team in tackles with 22, trailing only cornerback Bryan Cook (24) and inside linebacker Steve Tovar (23).

The Cougars got into scoring position twice in the second quarter, but Hanson — a normally reliable kicker with close to 60-yard range — missed two attempts, one from 47 yards and the other from 33 yards out.

As a result, the Buckeyes protected a 14-0 lead at halftime.

They made it 21-0 almost immediately as the third quarter began, scoring on the period's opening possession. This 81-yard series belonged almost exclusively to Snow, who carried the ball on eight of the series' nine plays.

The only pass of the march was a 27-yarder from Herbstreit to Saunders that got the Buckeyes into Washington State territory. Snow took them in from there, carrying on the next six plays in a row, then topping it off with a four-yard burst for the touchdown.

Hanson finally got untracked in the third quarter, booting field goals of 52 and 44 yards. The 52-yarder allowed him to set a new NCAA record for most career field goals of 50 yards or longer. He now has 17, breaking the old record held by Tony Franklin of Texas A&M (1975-78).

Both three-pointers also allowed Hanson to pad his other NCAA record of most career field goals of 40 yards or longer. He now has 34, three more than previous record-holder Russell Erdelen of Texas (1975-78).

OSU place-kicker Tim Williams, who reportedly idolizes Hanson to a certain extent, got one of those three-pointers back late in the third period on a 27-yard kick, giving the Buckeyes a 24-6 lead.

Bledsoe rallied the Cougars briefly late in the third quarter, engineering an eight-play drive that spilled over into the fourth quarter. It was an unusual drive for Washington State in that it gained most of its yardage on the ground. Tailback Shaumbe Wright-Fair had two runs of 10 yards or more on the drive, and Bledsoe himself scrambled for 15 yards on another play.

Senior running back Rodney Scott got the touchdown honors on a one-yard

run, pulling the Cougars within 11 points at 24-13.

But the Buckeyes responded with another well executed drive behind Herbstreit. Again, OSU kept the ball on the ground almost exclusively, grinding out 67 yards but taking 13 plays and chewing up nearly five and a half minutes to do so.

The biggest play in the drive, however, was on a pass. On third and five at the Washington State 30, Herbstreit missed connecting with split end Brian Stablein, but Stablein was interfered with by a Cougar defender, giving the Buckeyes a first down.

Seven running plays later, Bynote vaulted over the goal line from the one, giving the Buckeyes a 31-13 advantage with 8:20 left in the game.

Washington State had the ball two more times. Its next-to-last possession ended on downs when OSU free safety Chico Nelson broke up a fourth-down pass, but its final series resulted in a touchdown when Bledsoe found Schexnayder in the corner of the end zone for a nine-yard touchdown toss.

Despite the fact they were down 12 points with only eight seconds to go in the game, the Cougars opted for the two-point conversion try. Bledsoe was pressured and tried to get his pass away, but Tovar stepped in front of the ball and raced 96 yards with the interception for the two-point score, accounting for the final 33-19 count.

Tovar's two-point score was the first for the Buckeyes since the rule came into effect last season, but was the second such play in as many weeks involving Ohio State.

Louisville defensive back Ray Buchanan raced 80 yards with a blocked extra point kick attempt Sept. 14 against the Buckeyes.

#### Game Notes

Hanson's field goal that traveled 52 yards tied for the fourth longest in history against the Buckeyes and the longest since Michigan's Mike Gillette hit a 56-yarder against OSU in 1988.

Steve Goldberg of Minnesota booted a 52-yarder in 1974 against the Bucks, and Mike Rendina of Florida State

equaled that in 1981.

The longest field goal ever against the Bucks was a 63-yarder by Michigan State's Morten Andersen in 1981. That still stands as the longest field goal in Big Ten history as well.

WHEN HERBSTREIT rushed for

41 yards, it was the best effort by an OSU quarterback since John Cooper has been head coach of the Buckeyes.

It is believed to be the best rushing total for an Ohio State quarterback since Art Schlichter ran for 70 yards in the 1978 Gator Bowl against Clemson.

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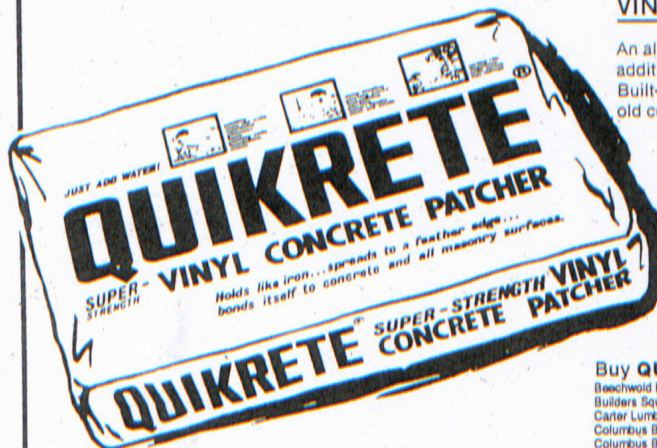
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*Sophomore Safety Takes Interception Back 42 Yards***Harper Enjoys First Collegiate Touchdown**

By Mike Wachman

Roger Harper knew he would score touchdowns for the Ohio State Buckeyes, but he didn't know it would be like this.

The sophomore strong safety returned an interception 42 yards for a score as Ohio State defeated Washington State 33-19 in Ohio Stadium Sept. 21.

Harper came to the Buckeyes as an all-state wide receiver from nearby Columbus Independence High School with dreams of catching touchdown passes.

But now that he has been on defense for two seasons, he says he likes it better.

"At first it was tough to switch to defense," he said. "I figured I wouldn't be scoring as many touchdowns. But I decided I'd score some kind of way.

"It doesn't matter. I'll score any way I can. Since I've gotten adjusted to the position, I like it a lot. I'd rather do the hitting than be hit."

And hit Harper does.

He has already put some big sticks on people this season, and he led the Buckeyes in tackles against Washington State, posting 12. He had two tackles for loss and a sack to go along with his interception, which was a result of tight man-to-man coverage.

The sight of Harper, or any OSU defensive back for that matter, playing man-to-man defense on pass coverage has been a pleasant one for Buckeye fans this year.

"He (Washington State quarterback Drew Bledsoe) didn't see me," Harper said. "It's basically a cover three, and I have the flat. I don't know what the receiver did. I just broke on the ball and was in an attacking mode."

Bledsoe tried to hit split end Calvin Schexnayder in the flat on a quick out pattern. But since Harper was playing so close to Schexnayder, he reacted to the ball before the Cougars receiver did. He simply stepped in front of Schexnayder to catch the ball and then outraced him all the way to the end zone.

Secondary coach Larry Coyer said he knew once the ball was in Harper's hands, it was six points.

"I expected Roger to take it back. That's the honest truth," Coyer said. "He's intercepted eight or nine passes in practice the last couple weeks and every time he intercepts in practice, he takes it all the way. That's what he did today."

Even Harper said taking it back all the way is something that comes with practice, so it wasn't entirely unexpected.

"You can ask anybody on the team," he said. "In practice, when I get an interception, I'm practicing taking it back. I got a good jump on the ball and got my hands on it and ran it in. Scoring was a great feeling.

"I looked back once and saw someone trying to get me, but I took it in anyway. They would have gotten on me if I wouldn't have scored."

OSU defensive coordinator Bill Young said he thought the interception return, the Buckeyes' first since David Brown ran one back 43 yards against Wisconsin in 1989, was a turning point early in the game.

"We've talked about causing more turnovers, getting more interceptions,

and we've been trying to do that," Young said. "Roger's interception, at that point in the game, was a big one for us because it put us up by 14 points early.

"When you're ahead by only one touchdown, you still have to be a little cautious. But it gives you more breathing room when you're two touchdowns ahead. I don't think they ever got closer the rest of the day."

Bledsoe threw for 287 yards and the Cougars offense racked up 449 total yards of offense. However, Harper says those statistics are misleading and more attention should be paid to the score.

"(The win) gives us a good feeling going into the Big Ten," he said. "A team like them, to come in and pass on us, but not really score on us (on a pass) until late in the game, that's a good sign. The yardage figure is something we can grow on. But the big thing is we're 3-0."

Harper said he knew that Bledsoe would be a good test for the OSU secondary, but he didn't realize how good the Washington State passer was until the game was played.

"He's a really good quarterback," Harper said. "It surprised me that he's only a sophomore. I give him a lot of credit. He scrambled well for a big guy and he was hard to take down. A lot of us missed him when he was running the ball. That's the sign of a good quarterback."

Harper savors games like this one, where 43 passes are hurled into the air by OSU opposition.

"It gives us more opportunities to intercept," he said. "Interceptions make good players."

If that is an indication, the Buckeyes have plenty of good players on defense. Harper's interception was the team's fifth in three games.

OSU actually had two more against Bledsoe. Foster Paulk had one near the end of the first half, but the referees ruled Bledsoe was already in the grasp of Buckeye defenders and whistled the play dead. And Steve Tovar ran one back 96 yards at the end of the game for a two-point score. However, that one doesn't count on the official stats because it happened on a point-after-touchdown play.

The Buckeye secondary did a decent job at limiting the big play, something Washington State has been able to hit on occasion this season.

Of Bledsoe's 26 completions, only three were more than 20 yards, and two of them were short passes that were turned into big gains by the receivers.

Harper, at 6-4 and 224 pounds, has been touted as one of the up-and-coming defensive backs in college football.

He's even been talked about as a candidate for the Jim Thorpe Award — symbolic of the country's top defensive back — but with his inexperience at the position, he's not sure why.

"I don't know why that is," Harper said. "I had a pretty decent spring. Somebody must have confidence in my ability to mention me in any awards.

"Maybe it's because of my size and speed. A lot of people like that combination. I don't care if I win individual awards, as long as we win games as a team."



Ohio State strong safety Roger Harper (24) outsprints Washington State's Calvin Schexnayder (6) to the goal line on his way to a 42-yard interception return for a touchdown. The play gave the Buckeyes a 14-0 lead and they went on to post a 33-19 win.

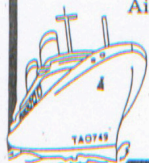
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# Tovar Says Yardage Figure Meaningless

By Mark Rea

Steve Tovar looked over the stat sheet from Ohio State's 33-19 victory over Washington State Sept. 21 and his eyebrows raised a bit when he saw how many yards the Buckeyes' defense had surrendered.

But he finally shrugged off the fact that the Cougars had been able to pile up 449 total yards against the Buckeyes, the team's largest chunk of real estate allowed since Illinois had 450 in a 34-14 victory over OSU in 1989.

"I think that's a little misleading," Tovar said of the Cougars' total yardage figure. "We wanted to overplay the pass because that's what was going to kill us. So they threw a lot of soft stuff underneath, stuff that was going to get them some yards, but nothing that was going to get them any points.

"Look at the final score. They really only got one meaningful touchdown, since their whole last drive was against our second-team defense and there wasn't any doubt as to who was going to win.

"Sure, we gave up some yardage and we don't particularly like that, but the most important thing was we came out with a win. We'll think about the yards we gave up at the end of the year, but right now we're just happy with the win."

Despite the fact some statistics made it appear as though the Buckeyes' defense had a bad game, others told a different story.

Washington State entered the game with the reputation of having a wide-open pass attack. And while sophomore quarterback Drew Bledsoe managed to complete 26 of 43 passes for 287 yards, many of the completions were for short yardage. In fact, the average completion went for just over 11 yards, and Bledsoe completed five passes which went for five yards or less, including one which lost three yards.

The Buckeyes put heavy pressure on the WSU quarterback all day, sacking him nine times — four by sophomore outside linebacker Jason Simmons — and hurrying his delivery on countless other occasions.

In addition, the defense caused Bledsoe to commit a pair of costly turnovers, a fumble that snuffed a Washington State drive at the OSU eight-yard line and an interception that sophomore safety Roger Harper returned 42 yards for the Buckeyes' second touchdown.

OSU actually had two interceptions in the game. Tovar had the other one following Washington State's final touchdown. When the Cougars tried for a two-point conversion, Tovar stepped in front of a Bledsoe pass and returned it 96 yards for a two-point score.

The interception did not count on the official stats, however, because it came on a point-after-touchdown play.

"We gave up some yards, but let me

tell you, they've got a pretty good offense, and their quarterback did a pretty good job of running it," said OSU defensive coordinator Bill Young.

"We tried to put a lot of guys in his face today and we got to him a couple of times. But they tried to keep us honest with their short passes and they did. And while it looks like we gave up a bunch of yardage — and we did — I didn't think we played too badly today.

"We made some mistakes on coverages and things like that. But for the most part, I was happy with what I saw. Hey, we're 3-0 for the first time since we've been here, and I'm not going to find fault with that."

Tovar echoed the sentiments of Young on the team's record, but also said he was looking forward to entering the Big Ten wars in two weeks.

"It's great to be 3-0," he said. "I haven't been off to a 3-0 start since high school. I think our summer conditioning and the hard camp we had in the preseason is paying off right now.

"But I'm ready for the Big Ten where they try and run you over. I like that a lot better than having to chase these little, quick guys around. I'm waiting for the Big Ten.

"A lot of teams have been passing on us more, but I think when we get to the Big Ten, besides maybe Illinois, a lot more teams will try to run it down our throats. That's the kind of style of football we're used to, and I think that's the kind we're ready for. Our secondary has really been tested, but when you get in the Big Ten, you have to be able to run the ball."

There might be a reason why Tovar would rather have teams try to run the ball against his defense. Arizona, Louisville and Washington State have tested the Buckeyes 112 times through the air, gaining 730 yards or an average of 6.5 yards per attempt.

On the ground, OSU has surrendered only 302 yards on 110 rushes, an average of 2.7 yards per attempt.

"We figured that teams would try to test our secondary early because we have some young kids back there," said OSU secondary coach Larry Coyer. "But I think our young players have played well. We've given up some yardage, but we haven't given up any real big plays, and that's what we're trying to avoid."

Young agreed.

"With our experience up front and in our linebackers, it only stands to reason that teams were going to try and test us in the secondary," he said. "We've given up some yards the last two weeks, but I think we've grown up a lot back there.

"We've got some guys back there who have gotten some playing time and know what it's like to play college football. We've made some big plays back there, like Roger's interception today, and I think we'll make more like that."

When a reporter asked Tovar if he believed the Buckeyes' defense had the potential to be a dominant unit, he answered diplomatically.

"I think this team has the potential to win a lot of games," he said. "I'm not going to say we're going to be dominant on defense or dominant on offense. We're just going to win a lot of games. Everyone's heart is into this, and that is simply what we're going to do."



Ohio State inside linebacker Steve Tovar takes in some water and some direction from OSU linebackers coach Fred Pagac. Also pictured are OSU assistant Bob Palcic and head coach John Cooper.

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