

*Former Buckeye Great Now A Yankee***Cassady Trades Gridiron For Diamond***By Jim Wharton*

The hair is still flaming red. The physique looks as if it could still stand up to the punishment inflicted by opposing tacklers. But Howard "Hopalong" Cassady is now on a different playing field.

With 27 football seasons having passed since "Hop" galloped off into the Ohio Stadium sunset after an outstanding football career at Ohio State, it is now talk of muscle fibers, synchronization and physical fitness — for baseball players.

Cassady, who became known as "Hop" after moving on to OSU from Columbus Central High School, is now director of physical conditioning for the New York Yankee organization. While his physical training program work is done primarily in the spring, Cassady spends the remainder of the year scouting baseball talent around the country.

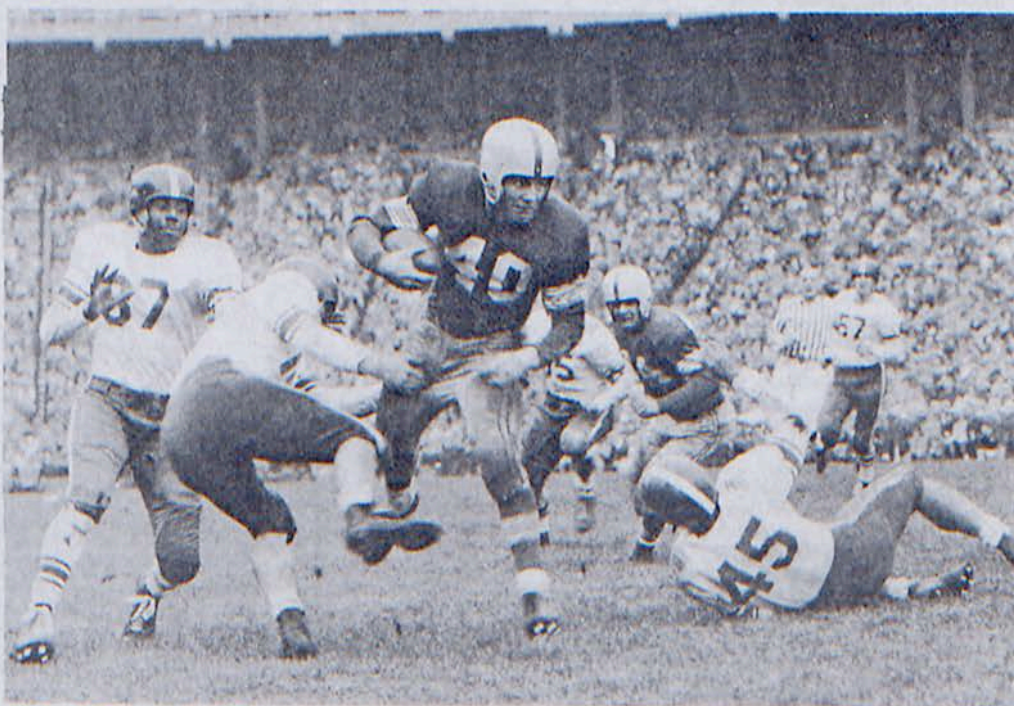
*Buckeye Sports Bulletin* ran into the former Heisman Trophy winner at an amateur baseball tournament in the Central Ohio area in late August.

Cassady, whose 2,466 yards rushing still ranks him fifth on the all-time Ohio State list, knows what he's talking about when he discusses physical fitness.

"The better physical condition you're in all year-round, the less vulnerable you are to injuries," he says. "You've got to maintain balance; the synchronization to your body. You throw the ball with your whole body. You hit the ball with your whole body. A foot injury affects your swing.

"We," he continues, referring to principal New York owner George Steinbrenner and the Yankee organization, "want to develop and maintain body strength, full-range body strength, not one particular muscle. We want to build up a whole group of muscles."

With a flex of the muscles, Cassady, now a Florida resident, went on to talk about his life since leaving the OSU campus.

**'Hop' Cassady Runs Against Michigan State In 1953 At Ohio Stadium**

"I had a chance to go into pro baseball," said Cassady. "I played semi-pro around Columbus in the Heart of Ohio League. But back then you had your 'bonus Baby' thing. They had to keep you in the majors. Most of them would go sit on a bench. If you have to do that, you might as well forget about playing. That's what I did — forgot about it."

Having done graduate work at Ohio State with Steinbrenner when the latter was stationed at Lockbourne Air Force Base south of Columbus, Cassady grew to know the stormy shipbuilder. After dabbling in concrete pipe manufacturing, steel sales and other things, Cassady went to work for Steinbrenner in 1976.

"George is a pretty fair man," said Cassady. "With George, if you don't do a job, he fires you. It's as simple as that.

"But George wanted to initiate a physical conditioning program," said Cassady, who spent 10 years in professional football with the Detroit Lions, Cleveland Browns and Philadelphia Eagles. "I was asked to set up a system. I brought it to George and Billy (Martin, then, and now, manager of the Yankees). It's an optional thing for the players. But we have a setup in (New York and three minor league affiliates)."

According to Cassady, there's a logical reason behind Steinbrenner's desire to have his players in top physical shape.

"If George is going to pay millions to these ball players," said Cassady, "then they ought to be in shape. It's his reasoning. And why shouldn't it be?"

Cassady helped early Woody Hayes teams to a 29-8 record and two Big Ten championships. The Buckeyes were unbeaten in 1954, his junior year, which was capped off by a Rose Bowl victory over Southern California and a national championship.

The No. 1 pick in the 1956 professional draft, Cassady signed for a rare bonus of \$15,000.

"You had," said Cassady, "stars playing for \$10,000 or \$11,000. Here I was, a rookie, signing for that kind of money. It was unheard of. You had all-pro linemen playing for \$4,000 and \$5,000. We (the Lions) won the league in 1957 and our winners' share was \$4,200. There just wasn't the money in football then like there is today."

Thus, Cassady must have a feeling on today's inflated professional sports salaries.

"You never know what the owners are making," said Cassady, whose son, Craig, played three years under Hayes at Ohio State in the 70s and is co-holder of the Buckeye record for pass interceptions in a season with nine. "But the players today have a wedge. They have a union; they're organized. The owners are the ones who have been steering the ship.

"But when you talk money, you also have to think of the extremes," continued Cassady, who scouts three midwest college leagues and four professional leagues including the Class AAA International League. "You've got a lot of them earning big money that shouldn't be and you've got a lot not earning it that should be.

"But players today have 10 times the counseling to lead them into college or into professional sports than you had in our day."

His 10-year pro football career ended in 1965. Cassady helped former Cleveland Brown great Otto Graham coach the college all-stars for five years while getting his feet wet in the business world.

Today, Cassady is content to let the athletes chase the big bucks. He'll chase better muscle tone, body fiber and work with the Yankee cast to coordinate and maintain body balance.

You just have to let your mind stray back to those glory years in the early 50s. Think of the fluid moves Cassady used to glide across the Ohio Stadium grass as he dashed and darted his way into the hearts of every Ohio State fan.

**Howard (Hopalong) Cassady (center) receives notification that he has won the 1955 Heisman Trophy. Also pictured are Tom Manning of WTAM-Cleveland (left) and Woody Hayes.**



MICHIGAN MEMORIES — HOPALONG CASSADY

# Game In '55 Most Memorable For Cassady

By JEFF RAPP  
 Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

These are a few of Howard "Hopalong" Cassady's favorite things: gold pants, Senior Tackles, Rose Bowl berths, hard-fought battles and tests of pride.

What do all of these things have in common? The Michigan game, of course.

Cassady, a Buckeye from 1952-55, played in some of the most memorable clashes in the series, especially in his junior and senior seasons when he was Ohio State's top player on both sides of the ball.

"They were all great games. Just about every time we played them it had something to do with the Rose Bowl," Cassady said of his encounters with the Maize and Blue.

Many longtime followers of OSU, including historian Jack Park, consider Ohio State's 21-7 win over Michigan in 1954 to be one of the greatest wins in OSU history. The victory included a historic goal-line stand and subsequent game-clinching scoring drive of some 99 and 2/3 yards. Fans rocked Ohio Stadium as the Buckeyes sewed up an undefeated regular season, went on the team's first Rose Bowl under coach Woody Hayes, then won the national championship with a 20-7 defeat of USC.

But even after experiencing all of that euphoria, Cassady said the 1955 meeting with the Wolverines is etched deeper in his mind.

"There's no doubt '54 was a great win for us because we earned a trip to the Rose Bowl and went on to a national championship," he said. "But I'd have to say '55 was the most memorable because it was my senior year and we shut them out 17-0. They never crossed midfield."

Actually, Michigan did move into OSU territory for one brief play because of a penalty, but Jim Parker tackled a Wolverine runner for a loss on the next play and Michigan never got closer to a

score the rest of the game.

As both an offensive and defensive halfback, Cassady took as much pride in the shutout as he did in an offensive performance that included 146 yards on the ground, several key kick returns and a two-yard, over-the-top touchdown plunge.

The game sparked interest all over the country for several reasons. Michigan would have earned a trip to Pasadena with a win, but a Buckeye victory would put Michigan State in the Rose Bowl since OSU, the defending Big Ten champ, fell victim to the "no-repeat rule." Michigan State had already wrapped up its conference play and was engaging in a meaningless non-conference game the same afternoon; so the Spartans sent one of their cheerleaders to Ann Arbor to work with the OSU cheerleaders.

Cassady was also a major drawing card as he was a front-runner for the Heisman Trophy. Meanwhile, the Wolverines had one of their most talented teams ever.

"I believe 15 of their players went in the (NFL) draft," Cassady said. "They had guys like Ron Kramer, Terry Barr, Tom Maentz. They were supposed to beat us and go on to the Rose Bowl, but it just didn't happen. I still believe it was one of Woody's best-coached games of all time."

OSU dominated in every way, out-gaining its nemesis convincingly in total yards (337-109) and piling up a huge 20-5 advantage in first downs. But before the Buckeyes could celebrate the school's first win at Michigan Stadium since 1937, there was this matter of getting off the field in one piece.

The game turned ugly with several late penalties, and Kramer was ejected in the final moments for supposedly swinging at Cassady, but "I don't think he was trying to punch me," Cassady said. The final seconds proved interesting, too, as fans moved unrestricted toward the field.

"The Ann Arbor police department



Hopalong Cassady

was on strike at the time; so there was some concern about the game getting out of hand," Cassady remembered. "We

had people throwing snowballs at us, and there were some fights in the stands, but it was pretty much under control.

"Anyone coming down on that field looking for trouble had to be a little goofy."

Cassady became Ohio State's third Heisman recipient after the season, following in the footsteps of Les Horvath and Vic Janowicz, but he said he never felt the award was clinched after his strong showing in his final college game.

"I never thought about the Heisman that whole day," he said. "Of course, that award is a lot more hyped now, which is why you saw (former Michigan receiver Desmond) Howard make his little pose in the end zone last year.

"But to me, the Michigan game was a game that you simply concentrated on winning the ball game, no matter how. It was a game of pride and great tradition, and you always played hard to the very end."

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## MICHIGAN MEMORIES: HOWARD 'HOPALONG' CASSADY

# Beating UM Ultimate Feat For 'Hop' Cassady

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Howard Cassady always will be remembered in college football circles as the winner of the 1955 Heisman Trophy and for a running grace that went hand in hand with his nickname, "Hopalong."

But summing up what Cassady was and what he accomplished at OSU runs even deeper than that. In fact, it may be best represented in an archived photo of Cassady moments after the Buckeyes' meaningful 21-7 victory over Michigan in 1954.

In the black-and-white snapshot, Cassady's No. 40 is evident on his jersey, although underneath it is a gaping tear in the cloth, no doubt from an eluded tackle or two. His pants are stained and splattered — Mud? Blood? — with the marks of on-field combat. Fullback Hubert Bobo is cooling him off with a cup of water and the two, as well as a couple of other teammates, are reveling in the magnitude of the win. Cassady was a sneery on-field competitor but his expression at this moment is pure joy.

The Buckeyes, thanks to their local hero, were going to Pasadena to play for the national championship. They would win it and send the legend of coach Woody Hayes into orbit.

Cassady's individual achievements would come the following fall, most notably the Heisman. Though that accomplishment has come up about every day since, Cassady still looks back most fondly on what he considers the ultimate Buckeye feat: beating Michigan.

That required a grit and toughness not as readily associated with Cassady, but they were as much a part of his makeup as anything.

"I would say that was one of the great things about him — he was tough," said Lee Williams, a former teammate (1954-

## Cassady Vs. Michigan

Won 3, Lost 1

1952 — Ohio State 27, Michigan 7  
1953 — Michigan 20, Ohio State 0  
1954 — Ohio State 21, Michigan 7  
1955 — Ohio State 17, Michigan 0

56) and longtime friend of Cassady. "He was not a very big guy but he was a great athlete and he could hold up to the punishment.

"His hands would be swelled up on Monday from guys stepping on him and he'd be pretty beat up the day after the game. But you always knew by Thursday he'd be out there for practice and ready to go for the game."

Being ready to go back then meant putting it on the line on both sides of the ball.

"I think the thing people tend to forget about Hop is that he was a tremendous defensive player, too," said OSU football historian Jack Park.

As an offensive and defensive halfback, Cassady worked his two-way magic at OSU from 1952-55 and his No. 40 was unofficially retired for 25 years in honor of his outstanding career. On Nov. 18, at halftime of yet another important war between OSU and Michigan, Cassady will have his jersey number officially retired by OSU.

Archie Griffin, college football's only two-time Heisman Trophy winner, had his famous No. 45 hung up at halftime of last year's game with Iowa. Vic Janowicz, the late 1950 Heisman winner, was honored at halftime of this season's home game with Penn State when his No. 31 was retired. Still to come are ceremonies for Eddie George (1995) and the late Les Horvath (1944).

But Cassady is next, and it's more than appropriate that his honor will come in the course of The Game.

Many like Park believe Cassady's most memorable play was an electrifying 88-



FILE PHOTO

**'HEISMAN HOP'** — One of the great OSU-Michigan games came in 1954, with the Buckeyes winning 21-7. The kingpin of that squad was Howard "Hopalong" Cassady (40), here getting doused by teammate Hubert Bobo. Cassady went 3-1 against the Wolverines.

yard interception return for a touchdown vs. Wisconsin in 1954. That turned a very close game and gave the Buckeyes a crucial 31-14 win en route to the national title.

But he regularly turned in stellar performances vs. UM. He led the way in that '54 triumph with his usual offensive heroics and a key interception.

The following year, in OSU's 17-0 shutout win in Ann Arbor, Cassady gained 146 tough yards in 28 carries, scored a touchdown, and played a big part in a defensive effort that kept Michigan on its own side of the 50 for virtually the entire game.

"That's one of the things we're most proud of — our record vs. Michigan," said Howard's son Craig, a defensive back with the Buckeyes from 1973-75. "We've got to have more Gold Pants than any father and son out there."

### Hangin' Up No. 40

As a longtime first base coach for the Triple-A Columbus Clippers and graduate of the now-defunct Columbus Central High School, Cassady has been an honored local former Buckeye for years.

He and his former OSU roommate, Paul Ebert, were honored by Ohio State in 1975 — Ebert for citizenship and Cassady, a standout shortstop and center fielder, for having his No. 40 unofficially retired in both baseball and football. Dr. Ebert, by the way, has since won the Nobel Prize for medicine for his groundbreaking work on cardiovascular surgery.

No one has worn Cassady's 40 since. Ironically, Cassady had no affinity for it at first. When he first reported to the foot-

ball team he was told by the assistant equipment manager that only two numbers were available — 13 and 40.

"So naturally I took 40," said Cassady, who wore Nos. 33 and 20 on the gridiron, as well as 10 in basketball and 6 in baseball, during his great career at Central High School.

Cassady, who also won the Maxwell Award in 1955, admitted that he would have been hurt if OSU had issued his number to another football player. In fact, he's irked that the program even suggested that prized recruit Andy Katzenmoyer wear No. 45, a move Griffin okayed.

"Archie was too nice," Cassady said. "That kid hadn't done anything yet. Did he even beat Michigan while he was here?"

"If they asked me I would have said no. I would have said, 'Tell him to get a number when he does something.'"

While younger players may not fully realize the magnitude of OSU's tradition, Cassady does.

"To be honored by the university and part of history is a great thing to me," said Cassady, who has more than 20 years logged with the New York Yankees organization — he has six World Series rings to prove it — and serves as an instructor at the Yankees' off-season facility in Tampa, Fla.

"I think it's the right thing to do. You've got to have some kind of tradition and stick with it."

### Greatness Became Him

Cassady was a huge OSU fan while coming up from humble beginnings in The Bottoms, a near-westside neighborhood.

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**MICHIGAN MEMORIES: HOWARD 'HOPALONG' CASSADY**

But word of his athletic prowess spread quickly. So did his popularity.

"I was the only white boy on the basketball team and I was a co-captain," he said with a laugh. "I think the guys all liked me because I had an old Model-T Ford and I used to give them free rides to school."

Cassady also can readily recall sneaking into games at Ohio Stadium to see Janowicz play.

"We used to get there two hours early before the ushers got there and just jump the fence and mill in with all the people," he said.

As Janowicz did for the Buckeyes, Cassady used to thrive in the old single-wing or T-wing offense at Central, even lining up under center at times and running plays as the quarterback.

When Hayes took over at OSU in 1951 he implemented a somewhat similar split-T offense and Cassady was a natural for it.

"I lucked out," he said.

But Cassady's career never had the appearance of luck, only great athleticism and determination. When things got hairy, Cassady was at his best.

"One of the things that's always distinguished him from other great players to me was he was the guy who always seemed to come up with the big play when it was needed most," Park said. "You hear about guys like Jerry West who always made the big shot or the big play. That's what Hop was. He was Mr. Clutch."

Before lining up in the same backfield with Cassady, Williams was a gridiron and track star at Springfield (Ohio) South. Before that, he already was becoming aware of the Cassady legend.

"I remember reading about Hop when he was in high school," said Williams, who retired after 39 years of service as a teacher and coach at Columbus East High School. "He was a great basketball player, too. I saw him play against Springfield South and he was the first person I ever saw score 20 points in a game."

Williams, who also ran on the OSU track relay team with Buckeye legend Glenn "Jeep" Davis, turned down overtures from other Big Ten schools to line up at right halfback next to Cassady. Obviously, he was overshadowed by the local boy.

"He has told me many times that I was a great football player," Williams said. "He knew there were other guys on the team who didn't get much attention who were good, too."

"He was a good teammate and a great player. He deserves to have his number retired."

Cassady left OSU with two Big Ten titles, one national title and 2,466 rushing yards, which still ranks 10th all-time at OSU. In 1954, he logged 123 rushes for 701 yards and eight touchdowns. He also had 13 receptions for 148 yards.

In '55, when he was named The Associated Press Athlete of the Year, he improved with 958 yards on 161 carries — an average of 5.9 per carry — and scored 15 TDs. He also finished with 981 yards in kickoff returns, a record that stood until Carlos Snow topped it in 1991.

Cassady was drafted by the Detroit Lions, where he played from 1956-61, leading the team in scoring in '59. He split time between the Cleveland Browns and Philadelphia Eagles in 1962 before returning to Detroit for five games in his final NFL season of '63.

**Great Beginning, Great End**

Cassady actually graduated from Central in January 1952 and was able to practice with the football team that spring. When Hayes heard he was to join the baseball team as well he told Cassady, "If you play baseball, get used to the (football) bench."

But because of his early enrollment, Cassady was eligible to play football that fall as a freshman and Hayes finally succumbed during the season.

"We were losing and Woody came over and said, 'OK, Red, get in there,'" Cassady said.

Cassady, of course, took the order. He went on to score three touchdowns. Ironically, he also logged three touchdowns in his last home game, a 20-10 win over Iowa.

In between were a mountain of game-turning and game-saving plays that ignited an OSU program that needed a boost.

"He was like a breath of fresh air," Park said. "Woody always said that Hop saved his job."

At the end of his final season — OSU was not allowed to return to the Rose Bowl because of the Big Ten's no-repeat rule — Cassady got the good news about his Heisman. In fact, he found out from George

Steinbrenner, whom he befriended when Steinbrenner was a lieutenant at Lockbourne Air Force Base in south Columbus.

Steinbrenner, who earned his master's degree from OSU, was an assistant coach at Northwestern for Lou Saban in 1955 when Cassady got a phone call from him.

"He said to me, 'Hop, from all my secret investigative reports I'm 95 percent sure that you won the Heisman,'" Cassady recalled.

Cassady found out The Boss, as usual, was right.

On Nov. 18, Cassady will be acknowledged for his achievements one more time by a lathered-up crowd in the Horseshoe. He'll be in town the entire week for signings and appearances — and, no doubt, the reliving of a lot of great memories, many of them against Michigan.

"They could retire it every year," he said. "I like it."

Expected to be on the field with Cassady will be his wife, Barbara Ann; son Craig, daughter-in-law Jackie and grandsons Shea and Kyle; daughter Sunny, son-in-law Jay Schultheis and granddaughter Rayne; and son David.

Craig Cassady said the official honor is overdue.

"Heisman Trophy winners are cast in the spotlight but the older guys maybe don't always get their due," said the younger Cassady, who still owns the Big Ten single-season record for interceptions with nine in 1975. "I think this is the right thing to do. It brings a lot of things back into perspective and it evokes great memories."

"I think this rates right up there and he's probably getting to that age where it means a lot more to him."

So the question is, will Hop the hard-nosed competitor be overcome with emotion?

"I'll probably be emotional but I'll be even more emotional if they lose," he said.

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## TIME AND CHANGE

## Hop, An Old Two-Wayer, Likes Gamble's Style

From somewhere out of the distant past of Ohio State football there arrived this season the apparition named Chris Gamble, here to occupy the newest yet oldest on-field position.

Call him the throwback.

Not since the mid-1960s has a Buckeye player even remotely attempted to do what Gamble does — play offense; play defense; run back kickoffs; run back punts; catch passes; defend against passes; block, if necessary; and tackle, if need be.

"I think he's great," said Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy, age 68, who must by personal experience rank as an expert on the subject. "He's a tough player. He's involved in everything. He goes after the ball. He tackles. For a player, it's a lot more fun to play both ways than just one way. If you're a good athlete, you should be playing both ways."

It's a losing argument, of course, and even Cassidy — who by doing so won the Heisman Trophy and became the Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year in 1955 — knows it.

The game has long-since gone modern from its iron-man past. The old arguments for and against have long since been decided — except, perhaps, in the minds of those who played it the old way.

"How can you call someone a great football player when they never made a tackle, never intercepted a pass, never returned a punt, never returned a kick-off?" Cassidy would like to ask. "You've got to play both ways in judging the great, great, great players."

Argue as he would, he also bows to the obvious.

"It's better for the fans now, I know that," he said. "You've got 22 players they can like. But what happens, it's not that much fun for the players. I enjoyed playing both ways. It's all I knew."

And all that most of the players of his generation and those that went

## TIME AND CHANGE

with

Dick Fenlon

before knew. From Rutgers vs. Princeton in 1869 to Michigan against Army in Yankee Stadium on Oct. 13, 1945, college football was predominantly a game of players who played both offense and defense.

Though the rule allowing players to enter the game at any time first came on the books in 1941, not until Michigan coach Fritz Crisler opted to use eight players strictly on offense and eight others strictly on defense against the heavily favored Cadets four years later did anyone seize the opportunity.

Pitted against mighty Army with World War II over just two months before, Crisler realized his draft-depleted team could be overwhelmed if he didn't do something drastic. For three periods, it worked. The score was tied 7-7 until Army scored three fourth-quarter touchdowns in a 28-7 win.

It convinced Red Blaik, who went to separate units on offense and defense, too. He was an Army colonel. So he called them "platoons." Platoon football had arrived.

But wait, the traditionalists weren't quite finished. In 1953, after a prolonged battle in the rules committee, two-platoon football was abolished and players were allowed to enter only once in each period.

From then until 1965, when unlimited substitution returned for good, only creeping changes lessened football's one-way character.

That left pro football Hall-of-Famer Paul Warfield, who played from 1961-63 for Woody Hayes, as OSU's last near precursor to Gamble — a skilled offen-



FILE PHOTO

**TWO-WAY BUCKEYE** — Long before Chris Gamble became the first OSU player in decades to start on offense and defense, 1955 Heisman Trophy winner Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy did it for the Buckeyes.

sive back who could double up as a pass defender on defense.

"Paul was a running back," longtime former sports information director Mary Homan recalled. "But they also used him as a wide receiver and on defense when the opponent had a very gifted receiver."

"I remember when we played Wisconsin, Woody played him one-on-one against Pat Richter, a great receiver. That's pretty much what Jim Tressel does now with Gamble, except it isn't one man, Gamble covers the wide side of the field. Woody had Paul cover Richter wherever he went. Richter was big and overpowering, but Woody figured Warfield had the pure athletic ability to compensate. And it worked."

Joining a crowd, Homan admitted that he himself warmed to the final victory of the two-platoon game only grudgingly.

"It's really a matter of opinion," he said. "I felt the really great players had to block and tackle. On the other hand, I had to recognize that your 11 best offensive players might not also be your 11 best defensively. Without question, this is better football now. But the other was darn good football, too. People who say it wasn't just don't have good memories."

Nothing really wrong with Cassidy's, of course.

Rewind back to 1952, when freshmen were eligible because of the Korean War, and Ohio State's season opener against Indiana. On Thursday, the kid just out of Columbus Central High was running plays against the varsity, and after the practice Hayes told him to get a uniform. With 13 and 40 as the only available numbers, he chose 40.

It was a natural. Broad Street, old Route 40, passed near where he lived in the Bottoms west of downtown.

"And there was no way I was going to pick No. 13," he said.

In the third quarter, Hayes inserted him to return a punt and there he remained, scoring three touchdowns and playing safety in a 33-13 victory.

You must know the rest: a four-year starter and finisher. The Big Ten's MVP (over Heisman winner Alan Ameche of Wisconsin) in the perfect-record national championship, Rose Bowl season of 1954. His own Heisman and the AP Male Athlete of the Year Award (he beat out Rocky Marciano, Otto Graham, Mickey Mantle and Ted Williams) in 1955.

That year, he rushed for 978 yards, scored 15 touchdowns and led the team in both receptions and interceptions. Try those on for size.

"People seem to forget about all the trophies I won," he said. "I guess that's because it was so long ago. I played 60 minutes a lot of times. I played a lot of games with separations, cracked ribs, broken bones. I broke all my fingers, and in my last game in the pros (he played eight seasons, mostly for the Detroit Lions, for whom he scored the final touchdown in their last NFL championship year of 1957) I broke my leg."

Often, as in college, that was going both ways.

"You just didn't go into the game and they took you back out," he said. "They never took me out until the game was sewed up. That's just the way it was then."

Tired?

"I never noticed it," he said. "The adrenaline would be running pretty high. (Trainer) Ernie Biggs would tape one finger to another and they'd patch you up pretty good at the half and they'd X-ray you the next day, or sometime."

But, God, how he loved it. They all did.

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25 YEARS OF BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

# Cassady Broke In, Then Broke Out

*Editor's Note: Buckeye Sports Bulletin is celebrating its 25th anniversary of publication with special features throughout the year.*

By ERIC LOUGHRY

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Departing from their modest west Columbus neighborhood shortly after dawn, Howard Cassady and his buddies would make the five-mile trek to Ohio Stadium by bicycle on autumn Saturday mornings, beating the ushers to the mammoth gray structure on the east bank of the Olentangy River by a couple of hours.

With no one around to stop them, the kids from "The Bottoms" district would slip undetected through the scant openings of the locked gates then hide in the bowels of the stadium and wait.

As the gates would open and the crowd started to mill about, Cassady and his pals would emerge and blend into the throng of people then watch the Buckeyes from various outposts throughout the game.

"When the people started coming up and down the steps, we'd just get out there and mingle with them and see the ballgame," Cassady said.

It wouldn't be but a few years before it was impossible for the adoring crowds that filled Ohio Stadium not to notice Cassady.

His name now adorns the north facing of the refurbished Horseshoe.

After gaining prominence at the now-defunct Columbus Central High School for his prowess in football, basketball and baseball, Cassady certainly didn't have to sneak into the stadium again.

In 1952, he was welcomed by coach Woody Hayes, who was then heading into his second season at OSU.

A four-year starter for the Buckeyes at offensive and defensive halfback, Cassady finished his career with a then OSU-record 2,466 rushing yards — still 11th all-time for the Buckeyes. Nicknamed "Hopalong" after the character played by William "Hopalong Cassidy" Boyd in western movies, he was one of the centerpiece of the 1954 national championship team, an outfit Hayes credited for keeping his job in Columbus.

The following season — 1955 — Cassady became the third Buckeye to win the Heisman Trophy.

In 1975, the same year his son, Craig, set a Big Ten single-season record that still stands with nine interceptions as an OSU defensive back, Cassady's No. 40 was unofficially retired. The numeral hasn't been worn by a Buckeye since.

Prior to the 2000 OSU-Michigan game, Cassady's No. 40 was officially retired. Like the other four Buckeye Heisman Trophy recipients — Les Horvath, Vic Janowicz, Archie Griffin and Eddie George — and the first Buckeye to gain wide acclaim, Charles "Chic" Harley, Cassady's name and uniform number are prominently displayed on the overhang of C-deck.

With this season marking the 50th



**TAKING IT HOME** — The subject of a full-page story in the Sept. 23, 1983, issue of BSB (inset), Ohio State halfback Howard "Hopalong" Cassady (second from right) and coach Woody Hayes (far right) are shown in a vintage photo taken when Cassady was named winner of the 1955 Heisman Trophy.

anniversary of Cassady's winning of the Heisman, he was honored at halftime of OSU's win over Illinois Nov. 5.

"It's a lot different than sneaking into the ballgame, I'll tell you," Cassady said. "But it's great to be associated with the athletic department and everything at Ohio State."

Serving as the Buckeyes' honorary captain for the contest against Illinois, Cassady tossed the coin prior to the game.

At the start of halftime, he joined his wife, Barbara, at midfield along with Griffin and OSU director of athletics Gene Smith as a highlight montage of his career was played on the video board above the south stands.

"Oh, God, I couldn't believe it," Cassady told BSB just after coming off the field. "I didn't know I could run that fast."

Smith presented Cassady with a gold football trophy to mark the golden anniversary of his Heisman.

"I just love to come back here and see all my friends," Cassady said.

Even though he had grown up in Columbus and went to great lengths to watch the Buckeyes, Cassady didn't rule out other schools when he was recruited.

He considered Ohio University, where his brother-in-law had played. He was also interested in Kentucky, then coached by the legendary Paul "Bear" Bryant, as well as Big Ten schools including Wisconsin and Illinois.

Eventually, though, Hayes and OSU won out.

"I went to visit a lot of schools, but when push comes to shove, I thought if I'm not going to make it somewhere, I'd rather be at Ohio State," Cassady said. "Then I wouldn't have too far to get home."

After graduating early from Central High in January 1952, Cassady enrolled at OSU. Hayes wasn't pleased when he found out Cassady would play baseball for the Buckeyes instead of taking part in spring football practice. Hayes agreed Cassady could play baseball, but only if he was in the starting lineup. The coach wasn't going to have his potential star missing football practice only to sit in the dugout.

Cassady, agreed, telling the coach he would promptly join Hayes' team if he wasn't playing on the diamond.

A standout shortstop and center fielder, Cassady played right away for the OSU baseball team. He would do the same the following fall for Hayes.

Freshmen were eligible because of the Korean War, but it didn't appear that would be of any consequence for Cassady as the '52 season neared.

The week leading up to the season opener with Indiana, Cassady ran against the starting defense as the scout-team halfback. However, after the Thursday practice that week, Hayes told him to go get fitted for a game uniform.

Only two jerseys were still available. If Cassady hadn't been a tad superstitious, it could have been No. 13 that would now accompany his name in Ohio Stadium.

"I did what anybody would do," Cassady said. "I took 40."

In a debut that foreshadowed what was to follow over the next four seasons, Cassady caught a touchdown pass and ran for two more in his first collegiate game, a 33-13 win over the Hoosiers. After Indiana took a 7-6 lead late in the first quarter, Cassady put OSU back out front midway through the second, jumping to catch a 27-yard touchdown pass in the end zone.

His second touchdown, a fourth-quarter sweep from 5 yards out, broke a 13-13 tie. He later added a 3-yard touchdown run.

Dick Brubaker, who would go on to become a two-year starter and a co-captain for the Buckeyes as a senior end in 1954, was playing at Ohio Wesleyan when Cassady made his debut. He heard all about it, though.

"Before that, there was talk that he was too small," Brubaker said. "And Woody's response to that, was 'Well, if you're good enough, you're big enough.'"

Cassady would average a solid 4.5 yards per carry as a freshman, finishing with 293 yards and four rushing touchdowns. He also scored on two of his 13 receptions.

When Dave Leggett was in his first year at OSU, he went to watch the local kid at Central everyone was talking about play football and basketball. Leggett, who would go on to split the quarterback duties with John Borton in 1953 and start for the '54 national championship team, was impressed. Still, he



## 25 YEARS OF BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

didn't expect Cassidy to have the immediate impact he did for the Buckeyes.

"We knew what we were getting, although we didn't think he would be — at least I didn't, and I'm sure the rest of the team didn't — the starting halfback his freshman year," Leggett said. "He just turned out to be local boy makes good."

As a sophomore, Cassidy averaged a career-best 5.9 yards per carry as he ran for 514 yards and six touchdowns. He also had a career-high 16 receptions for 273 yards and two touchdowns, one of them a game winner.

At Wisconsin, the Buckeyes trailed by two touchdowns heading into the fourth quarter but pulled out a comeback win when Cassidy pulled in a perfect pass from Leggett, who was making just his second career start, for a 60-yard touchdown with just 2:31 remaining to give OSU a 20-19 lead.

After a 20-0 loss at Michigan to end the '53 campaign, there was talk that Hayes' days in Columbus could be numbered. The 1954 season put an end to such speculation.

#### Consumed By Winning

Brubaker, who was selected as a co-captain along with Borton in '54, remembers Cassidy paying him an unannounced visit prior to the season.

The teammates sat down, with Cassidy making a plea to the captain that they had to win.

"We talked about that — we've got to set an example," Brubaker said. "He was consumed with winning and by doing a good job. He also had a bit of a temper, but you know, most great competitors have somewhat of an ego, somewhat of a temper, so it served him well."

Leggett also recalled Cassidy getting animated during games.

"Hop was a typical hotheaded red-head," the former QB said. "He wouldn't take crap from anybody. And if somebody dished it out to him, he might take it for a few seconds then he'd give it right back."

Cassidy turned in some game-changing plays in 1954 as the Buckeyes went a perfect 10-0, capped off with a Rose Bowl win over Southern California, to win the national championship.

He was a unanimous All-American selection, rushing for 701 yards and six touchdowns on 123 carries and also leading the Buckeyes with 13 receptions for 148 yards in the team's decidedly ground-oriented offense.

His offensive exploits are better known, but Cassidy also excelled as a defensive back.

"He wasn't afraid to hit," Leggett said. "He only weighed 160 (pounds) at the most — in fact, I think he weighed less than that — but he wasn't afraid to stick his head in there with any of those big, heavy Big Ten runners."

Prior to the '53 season, the NCAA rules committee put an end to platoon football. With limited substitution, players had to go both ways. That was just fine with Cassidy, who proved to be a playmaker at defensive back. He actually preferred defense.

"It's a lot more fun playing defense than offense," said Cassidy, who had three interceptions as a sophomore in '53. "I liked it a lot better, but you know, in those days everybody played both ways."

"And it was exciting to get into the games. You're not on the bench. You're on the field all the time."

Cassidy had four more interceptions

as a junior, one of which was a turning point of the '54 season.

With the Buckeyes trailing Wisconsin 7-3 late in the third quarter of Ohio State's homecoming game and the Badgers threatening again at the OSU 20-yard line, Cassidy intercepted a pass at the 12 and returned it 88 yards for the go-ahead score. His play demoralized the Badgers, and the Buckeyes scored three times in the fourth quarter for a 33-14 win.

Cassidy, playing strongside safety, read Wisconsin quarterback Jim Miller's eyes on the play and saw the QB was locked in on a receiver running a drag route across the field. As the receiver came into Cassidy's territory, the OSU defensive back stepped in front of the pass for the takeaway.

He picked up a few blocks, but Cassidy, who was playing with a broken nose sustained in a win over Iowa the previous week, still had to get past some uncontested Badgers.

"There was a guy from Wisconsin zeroing in on him, and he made a sharp cut to his right toward the middle of the field and faked the guy right out of his jockstrap," said Brubaker, who also played defensive back and was on the opposite side of the field on the play. "In fact, the jockstrap, I think, is still there."

"It was one hell of a play. I mean, it was unbelievable. He didn't even (break) stride. He didn't even lose steam. I mean, he just faked this guy right out."

In the annual regular-season finale against Michigan that year, Cassidy would again come up with a game-breaking play.

With the game knotted at 7-7, the Wolverines started the fourth quarter with the ball first-and-goal at the OSU 4.

But the Buckeyes turned away Michigan with a monumental goal-line stand, taking over possession roughly 6 inches from the end zone.

After managing just 68 yards of offense up to that point, the Buckeyes would drive 99 yards for the go-ahead score, with nearly half of that territory being covered on a run by Cassidy.

To begin the drive, Leggett called his own number on three consecutive plays, picking up a combined 11 yards and a first down. On the fourth play of the drive, Leggett handed off to Cassidy, who broke through for a 47-yard gain to put the Buckeyes in Michigan territory.

"That got us going," Cassidy said.

From there, the Buckeyes kept the ball on the ground, driving to the Michigan 9. Leggett then hit Brubaker on a rare pass to give Ohio State the go-ahead score.

Cassidy added a touchdown in the final minute on a 1-yard plunge to cap a drive that started after his interception, giving the Buckeyes a 21-7 win and a berth in the Rose Bowl. He finished the afternoon with 94 yards on 14 carries.

"Ernie Godfrey, an old coach down there (at OSU), used to say that no matter the situation, Hop had the ability to gear up to a higher gear to meet the challenge," Brubaker said. "And that's exactly right. He always rose up to meet the challenge."

"There were a number of plays my senior year that were instrumental in winning the games."

#### Chasing The Heisman

Finishing third in the Heisman Trophy balloting as a junior behind Wisconsin's Alan Ameche and

Oklahoma's Kurt Burris, Cassidy put in an early bid for the award in the '55 season opener. During a 28-20 win over Nebraska, he ran for 170 yards and three touchdowns. He also set up the Buckeyes' final TD with a 43-yard run to the Huskers' 2.

Cassidy was limited to just 37 yards on 11 carries in a 6-0 loss at Stanford the following week. After a 95-yard effort that included two scores in a 27-12 win over Illinois, he was held to 40 yards on 11 carries in a loss to Duke.

From that point on, though, Ohio State would win out as Cassidy surpassed 100 yards rushing in four of the Buckeyes' last five games — the only exception coming in a 77-0 rout of Northwestern, a game in which Cassidy scored twice.

In his final game in the stadium he had sneaked into as a boy, Cassidy ran for 169 yards and three touchdowns, including a 45-yard rip off tackle on his first carry of the afternoon, in a 20-10 win over Iowa. His three TDs that day also allowed him to break Harley's long-time school scoring record.

In the season finale, Cassidy picked up his third win over Michigan, running for 146 yards and a touchdown on 28 carries in a dominating 17-0 win, the Buckeyes' first in Ann Arbor since 1937.

Ohio State outgained Michigan 337-109 that day, and the only time the Wolverines crossed midfield came on a penalty. They were pushed back on the following play by star lineman Jim Parker.

"Winning our last game, beating Michigan 17-0, that was great," Cassidy said. "I guess the big thing

about that was they didn't cross the 50-yard line."

Cassidy averaged 5.8 yards per carry that season, running for a then OSU-record 958 yards and 15 touchdowns. He was selected as an All-American for a second time, with Parker joining him. He also won the Maxwell Award and was The Associated Press' Athlete of the Year, tabbed over Cleveland Browns quarterback Otto Graham, Boston Red Sox slugger Ted Williams and boxer Rocky Marciano.

The most prestigious award bestowed on him was the Heisman Trophy. Incidentally, it was an assistant coach from another Big Ten team who informed Cassidy the award was his. That former coach — George Steinbrenner, who later became owner of the New York Yankees — and Cassidy are still close today.

Before moving on to take a position on Lou Saban's staff at Northwestern, Steinbrenner was a lieutenant and coach at Lockbourne Air Force Base in south Columbus, earning his master's degree from OSU while Cassidy was with the Buckeyes. They met through the ROTC program at Ohio State and became fast friends, keeping in touch after Steinbrenner joined the Wildcats' staff.

As a coach, Steinbrenner was privy to some information and had found out his buddy was going to be awarded the Heisman, so he felt compelled to let Cassidy know as much.

The information was correct.

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# Winning Heisman Wasn't End Of Hop's Career

Continued From Page 29

Cassady was the first player to ever surpass 2,000 points in the Heisman voting, beating out TCU's Jim Swink by 1,477 points, then a record winning margin.

"When you've got a great team, you've got a good chance to win the Heisman," Cassady said. "If you don't have those people up front blocking for you, you're not going to win anything. But you have to have a winning team and outstanding players, and that's how I won it."

## NFL, Business, Baseball

Selected by the Detroit Lions in the first round of the 1956 NFL draft, Cassady played eight years in the league as a running back, receiver and defensive back. He had a career-high 413 rushing yards as a rookie, averaging 4.3 yards a carry. The following year he had six touchdowns — three running and three receiving — and a career-best 25 receptions from quarterback Bobby Layne for a Lions team that won the NFL title.

"Of course, they haven't won anything since '57, either," said Cassady, who also returned punts and kickoffs in the NFL.

His best year in the pro ranks came in 1958, when he averaged 17.7 yards on his 23 receptions, with nearly a third (seven) going for touchdowns. Four of his 15 receptions went for scores the follow-

ing season.

After two more years with the Lions, Cassady split the 1962 season between Cleveland and Philadelphia before returning to Detroit to end his career with the Lions in 1963.

He finished with 1,601 career receiving yards and 18 touchdowns, averaging 14.4 yards per catch.

"Pro football was all business," Cassady said. "It was entirely different (from college)."

After his playing days were over, Cassady dabbled in coaching football, teaming up with Graham, the famed Browns quarterback, to coach college all-stars for a few years. He was also able to return to Ohio Stadium to watch his son, who would go on to a five-year career in the NFL with the New Orleans Saints.

Cassady went into business manufacturing concrete pipes for construction before he started selling steel, which put him in contact with his old friend Steinbrenner.

Cassady was a manufacturer's representative who sold to Steinbrenner's American Shipbuilding Co. In 1976, Steinbrenner hired Cassady as the Yankees' conditioning coach, an unheard of position at the time for a baseball team.

The Yankees reached the World Series in '76 and then won it the following two years.

After many years as first base coach



JEFF BREHM

**HEISMEN AND WIFE** — Two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin (left) congratulates 1955 winner Hopalong Cassady and wife Barbara during a ceremony to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Cassady taking home college football's top honor.

for the Columbus Clippers, the Yankees' Triple-A affiliate, Cassady is now stationed at the organization's training complex in Tampa, Fla., where he and Barbara live.

Cassady was thrilled to return to the

stadium he first broke into as a boy and in which he later broke away from opponents as a Buckeye.

"What's good about it," he said, "is that 50 years have gone by and I'm still here."

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