

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

April 27, 1996

Longtime Assistant Brings Drive To New Role

Pagac Takes Reins Of OSU Defense

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

To home in on spring drills — or any Ohio State football practice for that matter — is to know the incessant bark of Fred Pagac.

The fiery first-year defensive coordinator likes to use his lungs to amplify his point and sometimes raises more than the decibel level. Poor decisions are annoying but can be rectified, Pagac asserts, and usually warrant a kind of hut-ho response.

A lack of effort or apparent desire, however, is so mind-boggling to Pagac that his eyes often widen greatly and an occasional spittle of chewing dip shoots from his feared mouth when addressing the problem.

Pagac even tends to point the bill of his coaching cap to the back, further illustrating the unmatched intensity in his face, just in case the offending player isn't already skittish in his presence.

"His coaching style is always going to be the same," linebacker Ryan Miller said. "What you see is what you get with him. He has a lot of intensity. I wouldn't say he goes crazy on you, but he definitely lets you know."

Still, Miller and his teammates think of Pagac as a players' coach.

"Coach Pug is very vocal and very energized, but he's not as much like that off the field," said defensive tackle Winfield Garnett, a resident of departed coordinator Bill Young's doghouse last year. "A lot of players, once they get on the field, they change. He tries to keep that from happening."

"But when he gets in your face, 99 percent of the time it's warranted. He's not going to just blow up on you for no reason. I like Coach Pug. If I'm playing well he tells me, and if I'm playing like crap you can bet I'm going to hear about it. But when someone tells you the truth, how can you complain?"

Added head coach John Cooper, who elevated Pagac to the coordinator spot in February when Young left for a similar post at Oklahoma, "The players love Fred. A lot of them he's recruited. A lot of them he's coached. They all respect him."

Nearly everyone affiliated with OSU football seems to cherish the fact that Pagac, a Buckeye tight end from 1971-73, is the resident drill sergeant and last true link between legendary coach Woody Hayes and the program. Sometimes they even wonder if the spirit of the old man in the black baseball cap is indeed emanating from Pagac, whose affiliation with smash-mouth football began while growing up in a tiny



GET TO THE BALL — New Ohio State defensive coordinator Fred Pagac gets into a stance to tell a member of the defense what he wants during a drill. Pagac, a former OSU player and 19-year member of the coaching staff, was promoted to coordinator during the off-season.

Pennsylvania burg.

"Football has been my whole life and I enjoy being around it. I'm maybe trying to coach as I played," said Pagac, who went on to a five-year NFL career before joining the OSU staff in 1978. "I like to think of myself as a hustler-type player, and I'm going to hustle as a coach."

"I'm a pretty competitive guy and I love my job. It's not hard to be enthusiastic about something you like to do," he said.

On the subject of the daily practice field shouts, Pagac has a what's-the-big-deal response.

"Being overbearing is part of football, isn't it? I think the kid that comes here loves football and he expects to be driven. It's the coaches' job to do that," he said.

"At the same time, every individual is different and you have to treat people differently."

Proving his surprising flexibility, Pagac already has designs on tinkering with the personnel and structure of the

Continued On Page 12

Ott Commits To Ohio State; Glenn Leads Draft Parade

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

The weekend of April 19-20 was a good one for Ohio State in terms of players coming into and moving out of the football program.

Coming through the in door was Cincinnati Elder linebacker Jason Ott, who announced his verbal commitment for the Buckeyes at his school on April 19.

"Ott, already tabbed as one of Ohio's top prep players for next year, became the first member of OSU's 1997 recruiting class. He chose OSU over Michigan and Notre Dame.

"I've known for a while now that I've been leaning toward Ohio State and that I wanted to go to Ohio State," Ott told *BSB*.

For more on his verbal commit-

ment, see "Recruiting Outlook" on page 15.

It was also a banner weekend for four former Buckeyes who were selected in the National Football League draft.

For the second year in a row, OSU had three first-round picks in the draft, led by flanker Terry Glenn, who went to the New England Patriots as the seventh pick.

The Oakland Raiders then traded up to pick tight end Rickey Dudley with the ninth pick. Heisman Trophy-winning tailback Eddie George went to the Houston Oilers with the 14th pick.

Quarterback Bobby Hoying was a third-round pick of the Philadelphia Eagles, going 85th overall.

For more on the draft, see our story on page 5.

Raiders Trade Up For Dudley; George Headed To Houston

Pats Make Early Jump Pay Off For Glenn

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

They came from four vastly different backgrounds and with little or no fanfare. But through those foremost of corny coach catch phrases — perseverance, hard work, and dedication — they hung their own star while helping Ohio State field its most imposing offense in school history.

They were not able to end their college careers as winners on the field, but at the 61st annual NFL draft April 20, they were given the ultimate player recognition.

They are Terry Glenn, Rickey Dudley, Eddie George and Bobby Hoying, and their individual success stories will now continue to shine in professional football.

The recent run on Buckeyes in the draft continued when Glenn, a former walk-on from Columbus, was picked seventh overall by the New England Patriots. Moments later, Dudley, who played just two years of football at OSU, was nabbed by the Oakland Raiders with the ninth pick.

It marked just the eighth time college teammates were taken in the top 10 of the same draft. The seventh had come earlier in the day when Illinois linebackers Kevin Hardy and Simeon Rice were chosen at Nos. 2 and 3.

"We're very excited," said Glenn's agent, Brig Owens. "Terry likes the fact he's going to a team coached by Bill Parcells, a good teacher of the game who believes in fundamentals. At this level, you've got to put your past behind you and bring it up a few notches and Terry understands that."

Glenn was concerned he might have hurt his standing with a subpar workout in front of scouts at OSU March 8. But he improved his marks in the 40-yard dash at a second, private workout and was taken about as high as possible, even though the New York Giants, at No. 5, also showed an interest. That receiver Keyshawn Johnson of USC was taken first overall by the Jets while Glenn was the reigning Biletnikoff Award winner was no matter.

"A lot of clubs I talked to said they had seen him on film and they knew what he could do," Owens said. "They knew he had great speed."

Things worked out similarly well for Dudley, the one-time Texas Class 4A player of the year who came to OSU on a basketball scholarship. A franchise traditionally built on outstanding, often misunderstood talents, the Raiders saw Dudley as a perfect fit for their vertical passing game and traded a bevy of picks to Houston to move up to No. 9.

"When the Raiders traded up, I kind of thought they'd pick me," Dudley told reporters. "Then when I heard my name, I just smiled. I'm just grateful for the chance. Now I just have to go do something."

Player agent Joel Segal watched the draft with Dudley from Dudley's Henderson, Texas, home. The suspense was minimal as Segal spent much of the morning on the phone with Raiders representatives, who had vowed to do whatever necessary to land Dudley.

"This is what they wanted and what he wanted," said Segal, adding that three other unnamed teams were

Buckeyes In The NFL Draft

Former Ohio State football players selected in the 1996 National Football League draft, held April 20-21, include:

Player	Pos.	Round	Overall Pick	Team
Terry Glenn	WR	1st	7th	New England Patriots
Rickey Dudley	TE	1st	9th	Oakland Raiders
Eddie George	RB	1st	14th	Houston Oilers
Bobby Hoying	QB	3rd	85th	Philadelphia Eagles

prepared to trade up for the 6-7, 240-pound Dudley.

Ironically, speed was the chief reason why Glenn and Dudley were chosen before George, who mopped up nearly every conceivable college player of the year award, including the Heisman Trophy, for darting through defenses to the tune of a school-record 1,927 yards.

Also ironic, the Oilers, who traded their first-round pick to the Raiders, ended up doing some more maneuvering to nab George at No. 14. The Houston-Oakland pact included a flip-flop of first-round picks, slipping the Oilers to No. 17. Houston then traded with Seattle at No. 14 to claim George, fearing he would fall to the Minnesota Vikings at No. 16.

"I kind of figured I was either going to go there (Houston) or Minnesota," George told BSB. "I figured I'd go from eight to 20, in that range. I'm really not disappointed at all, by any means, of where I'm headed. I'm very excited."

George, a native of Philadelphia, will head to a franchise where one of the most beloved players of all time also was a Heisman-winning running back — Earl Campbell. He'll line up in a one-back set along with another ex-Buckeye who made a mark as a rookie last year in receiver Chris "Tippy Toes" Sanders.

George, simply one of the hardest-working players ever to don the Scarlet and Gray, was the third running back selected. Lawrence Phillips, the sixth pick, will bring his outstanding talents and troubled past with him to St. Louis. Old rival Tim Biakabutuka of Michigan was chosen eighth by the Carolina Panthers.

"It was different," George said of experiencing the draft firsthand at Madison Square Garden's Paramount Theater in New York. "I really didn't know what to expect. It's very unpredictable with teams just picking people that I didn't expect. But that's how the draft goes. It wasn't a tough wait."

It was for Hoying, a co-captain with George last year. Hoying was hoping to be the first quarterback taken in the draft while watching the ESPN/ESPN2 broadcast of the draft with his family from their St. Henry, Ohio, home.

That honor went to Michigan State's Tony Banks, however, when St. Louis grabbed Banks with the 12th pick of the second round. Hoying admitted he had hoped to go to the Rams. Instead, he was snagged in the third round, 85th overall, by Philadelphia.

"Basically I'm just relieved," Hoying told BSB moments after seeing his name on the screen. "I'm going to a place that needs a quarterback and I think it's a great opportunity for me."

"I'm glad it happened today because I don't know what I'd do tomorrow."

Though he didn't join his teammates in the first round — Joey Galloway, Corey Stringer and Craig Powell were first-rounders last year — Hoying realized the significance of the day.

"I'm happy for everyone," he said. "We did some great things out there and all of us are deserving of at least a shot. Hopefully, we'll all have long careers and we'll be able to face each other a few times."

JAMIE SUMNER also hopes to meet up with his former mates in the pros. The left guard from Wichita, Kan., entered the weekend with a decent chance of being selected, but was never taken.

He'll now look into other options and at least one team, the Arizona Cardinals, already has invited him to free agent camp.

"I'll sit back for a day or so and see what I'm able to do," said Sumner, a two-year starter for OSU after transferring from a junior college. "Obviously, this is not the end of the world by any stretch. It would have been great to be drafted with those guys, but it only takes one team to like you."

WITH THE three taken in the opening round this year, Ohio State has now produced 10 first-rounders in the '90s, the most of any school. In the decade, Notre Dame and USC are just behind with nine apiece.

OSU has had at least one first-rounder — including the first overall pick, "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson in 1994 — since 1991. Unfortunately for OSU head coach John Cooper, underclassmen have been a big part of that equation. Wilkinson was a redshirt sophomore when he bolted, while Alonzo Spellman ('92), Robert Smith ('93), Stringer ('95), and Powell ('95) left after their junior seasons.

Though not chosen in the first round, Roger Harper ('93) and Lorenzo Styles ('95) are two additional recent defectors.



Terry Glenn

Glenn, who crushed school records with 1,411 receiving yards and 17 touchdowns in his only season as a starter, is the latest to leave early.

"You can't keep them for four years," Cooper said while interviewed during the April 20 Cuba-Giants game on WGN-TV. "If they're really good players they're going to go. Obviously, I wish they'd stay and graduate."

When congratulated by game announcers Wayne Larrivee and Steve Stone on having three first-rounders, Cooper said, "We're going to have a couple more next year."

One could assume Cooper was referring to third-year players Orlando Pace and Shawn Springs. He has gone on record saying those two will likely turn pro after strong showings this year.

Though he has tinkered with ideas to motivate college players to stay in school, even Cooper admits the riches in the NFL are mind-boggling. A recent USA Today graphic that quoted the NFL as its source showed the average salary for players selected in the first round last year is \$1,227,000. While that number drops considerably in the second round, the '95 average was still a whopping \$461,000.

OSU'S THREE first-round picks the past two years are just one pick off the record for Buckeyes taken in the first round. In 1971, four Buckeyes (John Brockington, Leo Hayden, Jack Tatum and Tim Anderson) were taken in the first round. Those four played on OSU's 1968 national championship team.

Mike Wachsmann and Ed Petoniak contributed to this report.

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Pagac May Add New Wrinkles To Defense

Continued From Page 1

defense. He has vowed the Buckeyes will line up in their customary 4-3 base, but other defenses such as the Eagle and 46 will be used whenever needed.

"We want to make sure we have all the guns in order to shoot the guns on game day," he said.

Cooper, of course, welcomes a fresh approach on defense, especially since line coach Jim Heacock and secondary coach Jon Tenuta have joined Pagac and ends coach Bill Conley on the defensive staff this year.

"I don't think I've seen anybody more excited about their new role than Fred," said Cooper, who retained Pagac when

he was hired at OSU in 1988. "He's (looked at) more film than anybody over the last month or six weeks.

"There was never any doubt I was going to make him the defensive coordinator. He's enthusiastic, but I wouldn't say he's an old-style coach. He's worked extremely hard to stay ahead of the game. He's visited with the San Francisco 49ers and he's talked extensively with a couple of other pro teams," he said.

After home warm-ups against Rice and Pitt this fall, Ohio State encounters some power football teams, then looks to take on more finesse-oriented clubs before wrapping up at home against Michigan. Pagac wants to be able to ad-

just to both styles.

"I think maybe the biggest change you'll see with us defensively — and it's not going to be on first down — is our play selection in different down-and-distance situations," he said. "There's a possibility of blitzing a little bit more or dogging a little bit more or bluffing and playing zones out of that.

"We're not going to do the same thing every week. What a team does is what we're going to try to defend."

And rest assured any alterations to the defense will not be the result of an ego trip.

"We're all in this together," Pagac said. "This is Ohio State's defense, not Fred Pagac's defense. We've got three great coaches on defense and our job as a staff is to get the players playing hard, sound and aggressive."

Because of Pagac's bulldog tenacity, aggressiveness seems to be the recurring theme with the defense. But that is no blatant transformation from years past, when Young annually fielded one of the league's most attacking and effective units.

Blessed with numerous experienced, hard-nosed performers, Pagac sees no reason to rock the boat too hard.

"I'm not sure it's going to be a whole lot different," he said. "Our job as a defensive team is get the ball. We want to have the best run defense and the best defense against the score in the Big Ten."

To make sure his players understand those goals, Pagac has been very vocal this spring.

"He's excited," middle linebacker Greg Bellisari said. "He's out there coaching a little harder. He's excited for some of the ideas he's always been wanting to do, and I think they're really going to help us as a defense.

"Whenever there's change, I think you always worry about that a little bit as a player. But our attitude is what makes the difference. We have the attitude that we're going to stick together and fight through anything," he said.

As balanced and talented as the defense was last year, breakdowns — especially against the run — at key times haunted the Buckeyes in the team's two losses to Michigan and Tennessee. Patching those wounds begins in the interior front, where nose guard Luke Fickell and the hulking Garnett need to step up.

"We've got a great challenge ahead of us, but we've got a lot of guys back, so it's high expectations for us," Fickell said. "More than anything, it's amongst ourselves."

Fickell will be backed by walk-on Shane Clark and converted LB Randy Homa. Garnett, who takes over for Matt Bonhaus, entered spring with no real competition. Therefore the coaches have shifted ends John Day and Jimmy Bell to tackle to push Garnett, whom Pagac called "a big, big key."

Before, Garnett was described only as big. Ironically, he's cut almost 20 pounds from his listed weight of 325 to improve his stature with the team.

Garnett will be tested since All-American candidates Mike Vrabel and Matt Finkes return to the two defensive end positions, although Vrabel has missed spring practice due to a toe injury that will require surgery. A pair of fast-rising players, Jeff Wilson and Tony Eisenhard, and a pair of early arriving Canadian players, Brent Johnson

and Clinton Wayne, will provide quality depth.

The linebacking corps also has strength in numbers. Pagac has created a dogfight at every position with Bellisari trying to hold off Roedell Dupree inside and Miller a notch ahead of Marc Willis at the Will/wide-side spot. The Buck/boundary spot has even more competition with Kevin Johnson, Matt LaVrar and Jerry Rudzinski engaging.

Things figure to heat up even more this fall when well-rated freshmen Andy Katzenmoyer, Na'il Diggs and Mike Burden all could contend for spots, although Burden could also find a home at safety.

The secondary is not yet set either, although all-leaguer Shawn Springs is a lock to start at field corner. Springs missed the first two weeks of spring practice, allowing Central McClellion and Ahmed Plummer a chance to impress Tenuta. Ty Howard also appears to have a job at boundary corner, although his listed backup is Antoine Winfield, who won over coaches last year as a freshman.

"Antoine Winfield is a football player," Pagac said. "He's an excellent player, and he's going to be on the football field somewhere."

Chances are Winfield will be used as a free safety and third cover man come fall. He's stuck to CB to this point with so few in camp.

With only four corners available prior to Springs' return, Howard is getting plenty of action. One of Pagac's favorite drills is to have the entire defense flow to the far sideline, making for extra long runs for Howard.

When asked if this is the most sore he has been after practices, Howard responded, almost out of breath. "Probably, but I'm getting older, too. I'm not a freshman any more. But it's still fun."

Howard transformed from a speedy cover guy to a contact-seeking open field player as last year progressed. Coaches want to see that same attitude rub off on the safeties, although returning strong safety Rob Kelly already has a stuntman reputation. Free safety Anthony Gwinn and a reserve group led by Damon Moore and Che Bryant seem to be heeding the advice.

"There are some minor things we all need to work on because we're going to try to be even more aggressive, but the concept is still the same," Howard said. "We want to make turnovers and big plays."

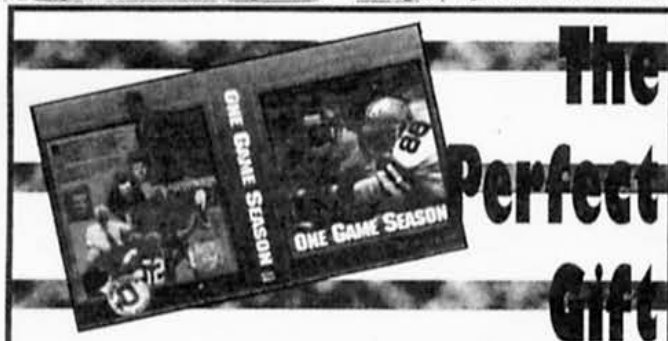
So just how good can this defense be if all the pieces fall into place and Pagac is able to squeeze more juice out of it?

"We could be the best in the country, easily," Howard replied. "Our front four is talented, our secondary is probably the best. We've got a lot of speed, size and experience back there. And we're a good two deep at each linebacker spot."

But before the Buckeye defense can begin proving itself in the fall, the perpetual wrath of its new coordinator is sure to be on continuous display.

"I don't know where it came from; I just know it's me being myself," Pagac said of his unmatched intensity. "I was taught to play that way. I want our players to be that way, and our whole defensive staff teaches that way. Hopefully all that will carry over to the defense."

If it does, expect the Buckeyes to be at their ferocious best, even if they don't wear their helmets backward.



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The View From 15th and High

By Frank L. Moskowitz, Publisher

Pagac Brings Intensity To Defensive Coordinator Job

With Ohio State's spring football practice closed to the media for the most part, things have been pretty quiet on the banks of the Olentangy. What little discussion there is seems to center on the offense, where John Cooper and his staff are trying to settle on a new quarterback.

With 10 starters back, there hasn't been much news about the Ohio State defense as the players work on fundamentals and the coaches try to establish a two-deep. What little discussion there is about the defense this spring seems not to center on the players. Rather, it centers on new defensive coordinator Fred Pagac and what impact he might have on the Buckeye stop troops.

I, for one, am excited about Pagac's ascension to defensive top man. For all the supposed sophistication of football today, I maintain that the game still comes down to who hits hardest and who tackles the best. Fred Pagac understands that. Whether he will bring the type of new ideas to the OSU defense that Walt Harris brought to the offense last season remains to be seen. That he will bring intensity to the OSU defense is all but a given.

If a Buckeye defender elects to take it easy in practice or during a game, he faces the prospect of Pagac — ball cap turned around, chew in cheek — right in his face. That would certainly catch my attention.

And those Buckeye fans who still clamor for a return to the days of Woody Hayes have to like Pagac, a link to the old coach. Pagac lettered three times for Hayes, playing in the Rose Bowl following his final two seasons of 1972 and 1973. He also served as a graduate assistant to Hayes.

While Pagac played offense during his days under Hayes, he no doubt learned the importance of solid defense. The 1973 Buckeyes allowed only 64 points for the entire season, an average of less than a touchdown an outing as they posted a 10-0-1 record, beat Southern Cal in the Rose Bowl and finished No. 2 in the country.

With Bill Conley also coaching on defense, the Buckeyes will have two men who played for Hayes coaching on that side of the ball. Perhaps that will help come Michigan week as the Bucks try to crank up some of the intensity on defense that may have been lacking in last year's game with the Wolverines.

TERRY GLENN'S selection as the seventh player picked in the NFL draft would seem to indicate that he was ready to come out after his junior year — or at least that the pro scouts thought he was ready. His high selection guarantees that the exciting receiver from Columbus will be a wealthy man, as will Rickey Dudley and Eddie George, who played out their full eligibility.

Future players who are contemplating whether to come out early or not should consider some dollar figures posted in *USA Today* recently. In 1995, the average annual value of a first-round selection's contract was \$1,227,000, while the annual value of a second-round pick's pact was \$461,000.

While what the second-round choices received was hardly chump change, a

player who has a chance to improve his lot by staying for his senior year might want to consider that \$766,000 a year difference. That's not chump change, either.

As you look at Ohio State's players who have jumped early, it's sometimes easy and sometimes difficult to see who was ready and who should have stayed. It seems that the pros often draft based on physical tools, not performance on the college field.

Alonzo Spellman, Ohio State's first early draftee, never really lived up to his potential in a Buckeye uniform. Still, he was selected by Chicago in the first round in 1992, though he was only the 22nd pick after some had thought he would go in the top 10. Many felt his reputation as an underachiever hurt him.

The next season, Roger Harper, who also never really had a huge season at OSU, left early and went in the second round. The Falcons surely liked his size and speed, but he's the type of player who might have moved up with a banner senior year. Robert Smith also left early that year, going as the 21st pick in the first round. With two more years of eligibility, Smith might have improved his lot. Then again, he might have gone AWOL again and hurt his status.

"Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson had his moments in his two years as a Buckeye, but like Spellman didn't reach his full potential. You can't get any higher than the overall No. 1 pick, however, so there was no reason for him to stay in 1994.

Last season, I felt Corey Stringer was definitely ready for the NFL. By failing to stay in shape between the end of the season and draft day, Stringer fell to the 24th pick, but he was still a first-rounder.

I thought Craig Powell and Lorenzo Styles would have both benefited from another year. Powell didn't turn in a dominant season at OSU, but based on his raw skills, he was still a first-rounder, albeit the final pick of the round. A big senior year might have raised his selection and his income.

Styles came out after a solid but hardly spectacular junior year. He was, no doubt, surprised when he ended up the 77th player picked, lasting until the third round. A strong senior year would have helped, but you also don't know how much his selection was hurt by problems with a drug test before the draft.

AS FOR my note last issue on punchy stadium names like "The Jake," "The Coop" and "The Traut," longtime *BSB* reader Larry Hansgen offered a theory on who started this phenomenon and solved my concern about what Ohio Stadium should be called.

Hansgen reminded me that John Cooper has referred to Ohio Stadium as "The Shoe" almost since the time he arrived in Columbus.

IT HAD to be exciting for Buckeye golfer Chris Wollmann to earn a spot in The Masters (see story, page 27). There are plenty of golf tournaments out there, many worth more money. But

there is only one Masters.

Once he got to Augusta, what were Wollmann's chances of winning? According to *USA Today* sports analyst Danny Sheridan, the odds against an amateur winning the 1996 Masters were a million to one. Those are pretty hefty odds.

But at that rate, I might have been tempted to put a buck on Tiger Woods of Stanford, who as an amateur I have to assume also went off at a million to one.

Former Buckeye great Jack Nicklaus had this to say in *The Sporting News* about Woods after playing a practice round with him before The Masters: "Arnold Palmer and I agreed that he

should win more (Masters titles) than we have combined. He is the finest fundamentally sound young golfer I have ever seen." Golfing legends Nicklaus and Palmer have combined for 10 Masters crowns.

Sheridan had Nicklaus going off at 90:1, even at age 56 ahead of such golfers as Jay Haas (100:1), John Daly and Seve Ballesteros (250:1) or Curtis Strange (500:1).

Fred Couples and Greg Norman were the favorites at 10:1, though Norman had to feel his odds were like Wollmann's as his Green Jacket slipped away. Champion Nick Faldo was in a trio just behind Couples and Norman at 12:1, along with Nick Price and Ernie Els.

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Vol. 20, No. 26

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

April 28, 2001

Dantonio Puts His Stamp On OSU Defense

New Coordinator Wants More From Silver Bullets

By JEFF RAPP
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Mark Dantonio rarely comes across as overjoyed — sincerity and emotional restraint befit him rather than the rah-rah stuff — but he's made it clear that he's at least internally thrilled to be Ohio State's new defensive coordinator.

"I am excited to be here," said the poker-faced Dantonio, who was hired to the post by new head coach Jim Tressel in late January. "This is probably the only job I would have left Michigan State for. I am very happy to be back with Coach Tressel. I think Ohio State has always had great tradition here on defense.

"That goes from when Coach (Bob) Tucker was here as the coordinator all the way up through when Coach (Fred) Pagac was here. I had the opportunity to work with Dom Capers when he was here, Gary Blackney. It's been a tremendous experience for me just being here in the past."

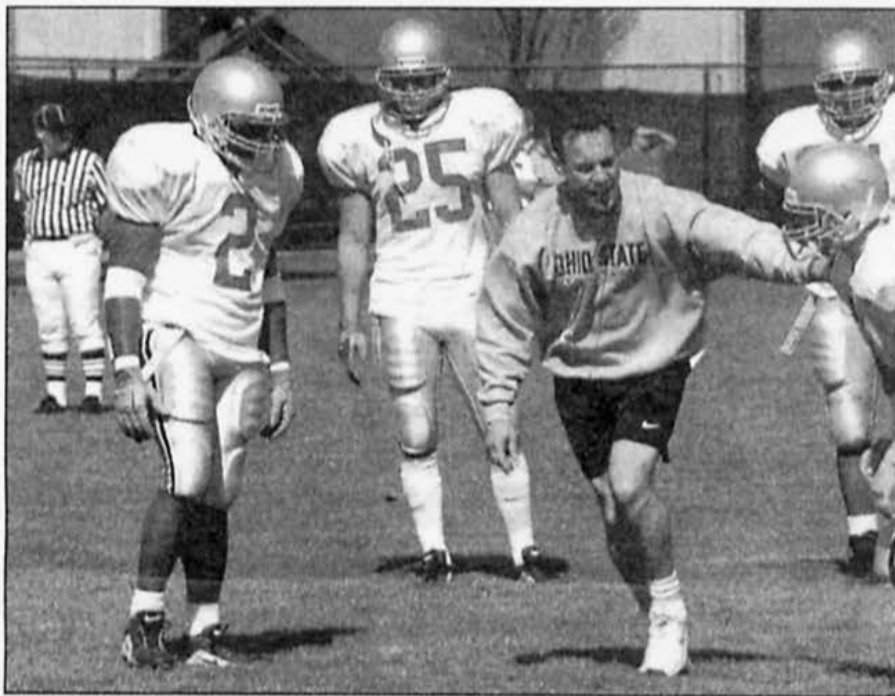
A native of Zanesville, Ohio, Dantonio had a pretty good idea of what he was getting into considering he was a graduate assistant for the Buckeyes in 1983-84, coached under Tressel at Youngstown State from 1986-90 and furthered his reputation as a defensive coach at rival MSU from 1995-2000.

So far this spring there have been few curveballs.

- Leadership from sage veterans Joe Cooper, Matt Wilhelm, Michael Doss and Donnie Nickey? Check.
- Inspired play from heirs apparent such as Kenny Peterson, Tim Anderson and Will Smith? Check.
- Some work to be done at corner after the loss of starters Nate Clements and David Mitchell? Double-check.

What has been above expectation of the defense this spring has been the level of enthusiasm, a high point under Pagac, but possibly surpassed with a fresh staff in place. Even though Dantonio has a no-nonsense, think-first approach, and the even-keeled Jim Heacock is back to instruct the defensive line, a fuse has been lit under the defense. Much of that has to do with the gung ho direction of Tressel and the youthful exuberance of new assistants Mark Snyder (linebackers), 36, and Mel Tucker (defensive backs), 29.

"To tell you the truth, since there's been a new staff everybody has been helping each other and everybody has been leading," Cooper said. "That's real good to see.



STEVE HELWAGEN

HIS DEFENSE NOW — New Ohio State defensive coordinator Mark Dantonio gives some instruction to one of his players, while defensive backs Mike Doss (2) and Donnie Nickey (25) look on.

"It's real spirited out here. That's our motto: Silver Bullets hitting hard on every play. We try to do our best and you can see that out there."

A starting defensive tackle and now one of the "old men" on the defense, Mike Collins said the spirit is unavoidable, even after a tough day.

"You've got to try to get better, that's what it's all about," Collins, now in his fourth spring at OSU, said April 12. "I had a bad practice today but I've got to bounce back. Coach Tressel isn't going to let you be down anyway. Because if you stay down, you're going to sit. If you don't have a smile and go-get-'em attitude, you're not going to play."

Another reason for all the zest is simple: This spring, defensive players get to hit people. That includes quarterbacks, who are now "live" in practice.

"That's a plus," said a wide-eyed Doss, OSU's freight train of a strong safety. "Quarterbacks running down the field giving you a chance to put a hit on them, I definitely like that."

In preparation for an important April 21 scrimmage, the noticeably fresh Buckeyes (they received three days off for Easter weekend) spent much of the April 16 practice knocking pads.

"I'd say eight periods today out of the 20 were live," Wilhelm said excitedly. "Last year, there were zero out of 20 ever live. We need to do that because we need to know who can play, who are going to be the stars on this team and who needs to pick up on what we're doing."

Getting The Jump

Even with all the hoopla, Dantonio is still trying to determine how much players are able to absorb and who can handle what assignments. He

Inside The OSU Defense

- A look at the defensive line (Page 14)
- Is it Kenny Peterson's time? (Page 15)
- Linebackers driving force on defense (Page 16)
- Matt Wilhelm wants to build on solid first year as starter (Page 17)
- OSU retools in secondary (Page 18)
- Sander, Huston step into special teams roles (Page 19)
- Spring Diary (Pages 20, 22)



Kenny Peterson

has installed an involved defensive playbook that has included new sets and terminology on all but two of the first 11 practice days.

So far, the defenders have kept up the cerebral end of the bargain.

"We're picking up the terminology, we're applying it on the field and we're showing our toughness and our team unity," Wilhelm said. "We're ahead of the game, and that's where we expect to be.

"To me, it's really not different anymore. It's something I've pulled in and I've taken. Coach

Continued On Page 12

2001 NFL DRAFT

Clements, Pickett Join OSU First-Round Parade

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The NFL draft proved one thing to Buckeyes Nate Clements and Ryan Pickett — it's pretty darn exciting to go in the first round whether you expected to or not.

It also, as far as both players were concerned, proved wrong the naysayers who said they made a mistake for leaving Ohio State after their junior seasons.

Clements, a cornerback, and Pickett, an interior defensive lineman, became the 36th and 37th Buckeyes to be taken in the first round of the draft since 1971 by going 21st and 29th, respectively. They were two of the six Buckeyes taken in the draft, which was held April 21-22 in New York City.

Clements watched the opening round unfold at his Shaker Heights, Ohio, home with 75 friends and relatives. Then he got the call from the Buffalo Bills.

"When they got down to 20th I was getting kind of anxious," Clements said. "Then when they called my name it got kind of exciting. I just wanted to go in the first round. I also wanted to be the first defensive back taken, and I got that."

The Clements pick came after Buffalo had traded down seven spots in the first round to the No. 21 slot in a deal with Tampa Bay. He'll join a trio of talented OSU corners in the league in Antoine Winfield, Shawn Springs and Ahmed Plummer.

Pickett, meanwhile, will join a St. Louis Rams team that was hell-bent on rebuilding its maligned defense in an attempt to return to the Super Bowl. He actually was the third first-round selection of the Rams, who grabbed defensive tackle Damione Lewis of Miami (Fla.) at No. 12 overall and safety Adam Archuleta of Arizona State at No. 20.

With those two picks secured, the Rams could afford to take a gamble. Still, many were surprised when the Rams called Pickett's name, Pickett included.

"It feels really good to be drafted by the St. Louis Rams," said Pickett, who goes by the nickname "Big Grease." "I was very surprised. I was not expecting it because I have not heard anything from St. Louis. I had no idea."

Clements and Pickett are among 15 OSU underclassmen to leave early for the pros since 1991. They are also among 17 Buckeyes taken in the first round during those same 11 drafts.

Clements Follows Winfield — Again

In trekking to Buffalo, Clements will once again get to learn from one of the best in Winfield. As a freshman in 1998, Clements understudied, and occasionally played with, Plummer and Winfield, that year's Thorpe Award winner.

"It's great to be playing with 'Toine again," Clements said. "I learned a lot from him while he was here. He kind of took me under his wing."

The 5-11 Clements was listed at 190 pounds going into his junior year but he's bulked up to 209 pounds. He dazzled onlookers with his relative strength at workouts and reportedly was timed running a 4.37-second 40-yard dash.

The 21-year-old defensive back is coming off a junior season in which he ranked third on the Buckeyes in tackles with 68 and added four interceptions and 13 pass breakups. As a sophomore, Clements arguably was better. He led all Buckeyes in minutes played (369) and solo tackles (76) in 1999 and ranked second only to All-American linebacker Nail Diggs in total tackles with 90, a nearly unheard-of figure for a cornerback unless your name is Antoine Winfield.

New Bills coach Gregg Williams plans to

use more blitzing and defensive aggression and the team wanted to find another corner who could cover man-to-man. Clements, according to reports, is expected to be a nickel back who plays a lot on third downs in his rookie season.

"He happens to be in the tall range, and he can run fast and change directions," Williams told the Buffalo News. "He can play the man-to-man defense we like to play."

Added Bills scouting chief Dwight Adams, "The guy's got excellent ball skills. He goes up in the air and locates it."

Buffalo, which had one of the league's worst special teams last season, also is intrigued with Clements' ability to return punts. He returned 39 punts for 513 yards (a 13.2 average) for OSU last year, including an 83-yard runback for a touchdown.

Pickett Fenced In By Rams

Pickett, 21, became the first Rams first-rounder from Ohio State since 1997, when Orlando Pace was tabbed by the team with the top pick in the draft. Many analysts projected Pickett to be taken in the third round or later but Rams head coach Mike Martz cited his unique ability to rush the quarterback from the middle of the line, an oddity in the NFL.

"We are pleased with this young man," Rams general manager Charlie Arney said of Pickett, 6-2, 297 pounds. "He will need to learn what it takes to play in the National Football League, and I think he will."

The team reportedly went with Pickett on a strong recommendation from scout Dave Razzano, who said the lineman "probably should be a first-rounder."

OSU defensive line coach Jim Heacock said Pickett was unheralded in his three college seasons. A native of Zephyrhills, Fla., Pickett was active throughout his playing career. He logged 109 career tackles in his three seasons at OSU including 39 solos, six tackles for loss and three sacks last season.

"I feel very confident in my ability," Pickett said. "I have been playing all my life and I am not one to sit back and watch. I plan on getting in and getting involved early."

Four More Wait For Day 2

There was a definite gap in the draft as far as Buckeye fans were concerned as the next OSU selection was defensive end Rodney Bailey to Pittsburgh in the sixth round, 181st overall. A native of Cleveland, Bailey will be wearing a uniform he couldn't avoid as a kid.

"There's no way you could not be mixed in the whole rivalry," he said. "When I was younger, of course, I was a Browns fan, but I was always in awe of the Pittsburgh Steelers and the success they've had throughout the years with the history of the team and all the greats. I want to follow in that tradition."

Three more Buckeyes were tabbed in the seventh and final round, beginning with wide receiver Reggie Germany, who went 214th overall to Buffalo. Germany had a subpar senior year and was academically ineligible for the Outback Bowl, but he rallied with a strong showing in the Hula Bowl.

Of Germany, Mark Gaughan of the Buffalo News wrote, "Will be a project for new receivers coach Fred Graves. A talented enigma. Makes tough catches and drops easy ones. Needs to improve concentration and hands."

The Oakland Raiders then grabbed Buckeyes consecutively. With picks No. 228 and No. 229 overall, the Raiders closed out their draft by selecting running back Derek Combs and wide receiver Ken-Yon Rambo back-to-back. The two could find themselves in direct competition with each other as Raiders head coach Jon Gruden was quoted

Buckeyes In The Draft

Here is a look at Buckeyes selected in the 2001 NFL draft.

Player	Pos.	Overall		Team
		Round	Pick	
Nate Clements	CB	1	21	Buffalo Bills
Ryan Pickett	DT	1	29	St. Louis Rams
Rodney Bailey	DE	6	181	Pittsburgh Steelers
Reggie Germany	WR	7	214	Buffalo Bills
Derek Combs	RB	7	228	Oakland Raiders
Ken-Yon Rambo	WR	7	229	Oakland Raiders

as saying the team will try the speedy Combs at wide-out.

Rambo's draft status could only be viewed as disappointing. Just months ago several publications such as The Sporting News and online services such as nflraftdigest.com rated him among the top receivers. ESPN draft guru Mel Kiper Jr. projected him as a third-rounder.

Others Of Note

On the free-agent front, cornerback David Mitchell has signed an unspecified deal with the Chicago Bears. Also, wide receiver Vanness Provitt was close to a deal with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Others who were looking into their options as of press time included defensive linemen Joe Brown, Brent Johnson and Clinton Wayne, running back Jerry Westbrook, and offensive linemen Henry Fleming, Mike Gurr and Tam Hopkins.

Kicker Dan Stultz, who continues to deal with back problems, reportedly is working



STEVE HELWAGEN

CLEMENTS HITS ON 21 — Former Buckeye cornerback Nate Clements (left, walking with OSU strength and conditioning coach Dave Kennedy) was selected by Buffalo with the 21st overall pick in the NFL draft April 21.

for his father back in his hometown of Orrville, Ohio, and apparently has given up on football. Wide receiver Chad Cacchio plans to enter dental school.

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COVER STORY: DANTONIO PUTS STAMP ON DEFENSE

Dantonio Looking Near, Far For Big-Play Guys

Continued From Page 1

Tressel has taken over the program and it's really not different anymore. It's an everyday thing for Coach Tressel to be out there telling you what you did right and telling you what you did wrong, getting after you."

In the days leading up to and during the spring session, Dantonio has made it clear exactly what is expected of any hopeful player on defense.

"We're going to put players on the field who have great toughness, give great effort and they know what to do," said the 45-year-old coordinator.

"We will establish who can tackle. Obviously, if you're a defensive back, you have to be able to tackle in space. If you're a linebacker, you have a little less space. If you're a lineman and you can get in a phone booth and knock them back, you're in good shape.

"You also need to be able to get off blocks and beat blocks. You can't get knocked down in the secondary. These are basic things.

"The final thing is," he added "we need to find out who are our big-play guys. Who are the guys who can sack the quarterback? Who is a good blitz? Who are the guys who can knock the ball loose? Who can make the play on the deep ball?"

"We have to figure out who those big-

play guys are and feature them. I think Ohio State has done a great job in the past of featuring guys like Antoine Winfield, (Na'il) Diggs or (Andy) Katzenmoyer.

"Whether it's Joe Cooper or Matt Wilhelm or Mike Doss, we have to establish who the big-play guys are and get them in position to make those kind of plays."

Breaking It Down

With four more spring sessions remaining as of press time, including the Scarlet and Gray Game on April 28, much was to be determined concerning the defense. However, some things already were forming in the three key areas. For example:

• **Defensive line** — Dantonio has been most impressed with this group, which has a continuity advantage with Heacock back as the position coach.

A talented end who helped return Canton (Ohio) McKinley High School to powerhouse status, Peterson appears ready to become an impact player up front. He and sophomores Smith and Darrion Scott, a player recently singled out by Dantonio, will try to pick up where long-time starters Brent Johnson and Rodney Bailey left off. Senior and journeyman Tim Cheatwood also has shown signs of being a useful rush end.

Anderson has been lining up inside



STEVE HELWAGEN

BLOOMING IN SPRING — Linebackers Matt Wilhelm (left) and Joe Cooper (10), getting some tips from graduate assistant Greg Bellisari and assistant coach Mark Snyder (right), have, by all accounts, played well during spring practice.

with Collins in place of early departee Ryan Pickett and is matching Collins in tenacity so far. David Thompson is also fighting hard for playing time, while Fred Sturup was providing service as a back-up. The coaching staff would like to see Collins, a wily senior, help show the three youngsters the way.

"I'm asked to be more of a leader and do more pep talks and things like that," Collins said. "Obviously, I haven't gotten around to that yet because I guess that's just not me. But I've got to become a little more of that person who talks to people. I can't just worry about myself. I've got to worry about everyone else now."

• **Linebacker** — The three starting positions appear set for now with Wilhelm inside flanked by fellow returning starters Cooper and Courtland Bullard. All three appear to be having solid springs, especially Wilhelm, who logged 66 tackles as a sophomore last season, fourth best on the team.

He knew the only two ways he could lose grip on his starting spot were if he got hurt or failed to pick up any of the new lingo. While he continues to cross his fingers about his health, he has made sure the latter didn't happen.

"My report card personally, I'm where they wanted me to be," he said. "I'm a leader of this defense and that's what I expect of myself."

The athleticism of Cooper and Bullard has never come into question, but Dantonio would like to see both of them become sure-handed tacklers in their senior season, no matter which direction they are moving.

"The first thing we want to do is stop the run," Dantonio said. "Any successful defense I have been a part of, we were able to stop the run. If you look back at last year at Ohio State, they were No. 9 in the nation and No. 1 in the conference in stopping the run. They were a very good defense."

"The front seven has been doing a pretty good job, but there are some things we could be better at. Our linebackers have got to tackle in space."

One LB who has caught Dantonio's eye is Cie Grant, a junior and former safety. Grant was the first player the coach mentioned when asked who is enjoying an eye-opening spring. Marco Cooper, also slotted

outside, is beginning to make some strides.

The emergence of Grant and the return of sophomore Robert Reynolds give OSU solid depth on the outside. The staff still would like to see more players emerge, especially someone behind Wilhelm inside. Fred Pagac Jr. would be the top candidate.

• **Secondary** — This outfit has been both encouraging because of its competitiveness and a little suspect due to its relative lack of experience. The safety spots are all but set in stone with Doss back at strong safety and fellow junior Nickey penned in at the free spot. Youngsters Will Allen and Thomas Matthews are working well behind those two.

At corner, five young players are reaping with their sights set on earning a starting position — Bobby Britton, Bam Childress, Curtis Crosby, Harlen Jacobs and Richard McNutt. Childress, in fact, could do double duty at wide receiver after a big showing in the April 21 scrimmage.

"Those guys are going hard every day and competing," Doss said. "This is their shot and they understand that. They've got some big shoes to fill — Nate Clements and Dave Mitchell were both great players for us last year — so those young corners have to get it in gear."

Added Dantonio on the subject, "There's competition there and that's good. There are some techniques they need to do a better job at. You've got to be able to play the deep ball, make the open-field tackle and change direction. We'll keep working at those. We'll need repetitions to get better. We've got some young players so it will take time. Some of them were scout team guys last year."

The young players have been lost in some drills. They've also dropped some interceptions when they were in the right position. But all of them have shown a willingness to stick their noses in the pile and wrap up, which is most pleasing to the coaches.

"To play defensive back here you've got to be able to tackle," Tucker said flatly. "We ask all of our DBs to be good tacklers. Plus, you've got to be able to play man-to-man and you have to be able to play the ball at the deep part of the field. Those are things that we are evaluating every day and we're putting players in those situations daily."

Added Dantonio, "One of the biggest pleasures as a defensive coach came at Michigan State in 1999, when we allowed one run over 20 yards all season. That's a credit to how the secondary tackles and how the defense pursues. That's where we want to be but we're not there yet."

"Change is tough. It's tough on everybody."

However, it does lead to vitality. Now the question is, will spirit alone directly lead to defensive greatness?

Probably not.

"Most of these young guys are going to have to step up and play hard," Collins said. "If not, it's going to be a long year."

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THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Competition At Quarterback Can Only Help Bellisari

I know this issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is supposed to be devoted to defense, but, like many Buckeye fans and observers, I still want to talk about the quarterback position. It seems as if Scott McMullen might be making a move at incumbent Steve Bellisari.

Now the pecking order might change by the time spring ball is done or after fall camp, but this seems like the first time that another Buckeye quarterback has made a run at Bellisari since he wrestled the starting position from Austin Moherman in the third game of his sophomore season.

My personal feeling is that Bellisari will still be the starter, come the Akron game on Sept. 8. But having a legitimate contender behind him can only help the team. If Bellisari struggles, which he has certainly been known to do, the coaching staff might be less reluctant to go to the bench than the John Cooper regime was in the past.

Additionally, I believe Bellisari will benefit from more competition. There had to have been a point in his sophomore year when Bellisari realized that the coaching staff had turned its back on Moherman, and last season only the inexperienced McMullen and Craig Krenzel were on the bench.

So it's been a long time since Bellisari has had to worry about another quarterback taking his place. While Bellisari is known as a hard worker, prepping and playing as the uncontested starter is a lot different from having a player nipping at your heels.

As I have said in this space many times, I never felt that handling quarterbacks was Cooper's strong suit.

Hopefully, Jim Tressel does a better job of having reserve quarterbacks prepared and, accordingly, shows a greater willingness to go to the bench if necessary. Should Tressel have more than one capable quarterback, I also hope he will be willing to choose one over the other, rather than recreating the Stan Jackson-Joe Germaine situation.

Time will tell.

Some Other Thoughts

• I found some comments by linebacker Matt Wilhelm in this issue refreshing. Wilhelm was talking about his problems with pass coverage last season.

"That was one of the main reasons they took me off the field last year — because I wasn't good at it," Wilhelm said of his coverage skills. "To get better at those things this spring would be great for me."

When was the last time you heard a player acknowledge that he was taken off the field because he wasn't doing something well? The first key to getting better is to recognize that you have room for improvement, and that you aren't riding the pine because the coach is picking on you.

Wilhelm continues to show that he has the stuff that leaders are made of and he also looks like he is ready to continue in the long line of great Ohio State inside linebackers.

Wilhelm, as I'm sure you recall, was the one who questioned the way Ken-Yon Rambo went about being a Buckeye captain last season.

By the way, did anyone besides those of us in the BSB office figure that Rambo was the most stunned of anybody when he was-

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH
Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

n't taken until the seventh and final round of the NFL draft?

• I also took note when Tressel went back to some toughness drills that he learned when he was an assistant to former Buckeye head coach Earle Bruce. I never thought toughness was a hallmark of the Cooper era. Bruce's teams, on the other hand, may have lost some games they shouldn't have, but I don't ever remember anyone questioning their toughness, especially in the Michigan game.

Bruce's teams lost their four games to Michigan by an average of 5.3 points with a high margin of 10 in a 27-17 loss in 1985. Cooper's teams lost their games to the Wolverines by an average of 10.9 points, with two losses of 28 points — 31-3 in 1991 and 28-0 in 1995.

I actually figured that Cooper's loss margin would be wider. One tends to forget, I guess, that he had two games that his team lost by just three points (1988 and 1990) and another where the Buckeyes lost by four (1996).

Sometimes teams are a reflection of their coach. I think Bruce just looks tougher than Cooper did. I know Cooper was a member of the "Dirty 30" as a player at Iowa State and all, but if the two were in a fight, who would you put your money on? I'd put my money on Bruce.

• In our coverage of the defensive secondary elsewhere in this issue, you will notice that there is some concern with the size and experience of some of the players vying for playing time, especially at cornerback.

This made me flash back to the secondary of Ohio State's 1984 Rose Bowl team, a team that had Tressel on staff.

That team featured a small and inexperienced backfield that was one of the best that I have seen in my more than 20 years following Ohio State. The starters in that secondary were sophomore Sonny Gordon (6-0, 187), redshirt freshman Terry White (5-9, 170) and, at the corners, true freshmen Greg Rogan (5-10, 180) and William White (5-10, 180).

Talk about tough players under Bruce. These guys, despite their size, were not afraid to mix it up. I still say Terry White was, pound for pound, one of the hardest hitters I've seen play at Ohio State.

Geiger's View

As I mentioned in this space last issue, Dan Crawford of Columbus Business First recently had an interesting interview with Ohio State athletic director Andy Geiger.

Crawford asked Geiger what the biggest headache was with regard to all the new facilities being built on campus.

"Well, the financing of it and the ongoing cost of it and the debt is a great worry. It's always been a worry. But the marching orders on the arena were clear," Geiger said, having noted that former OSU president Gordon Gee had already set the wheels for the Schottenstein Center in motion when Geiger took over as AD, "and the necessity on the stadium was absolutely clear. The original idea for the stadium was to bring it to code, and that would have cost \$67 million and had a cost of

13,000 seats, so that was not acceptable."

Geiger was asked why he was so concerned about the debt created by all of the building and whether he was confident in the plan to pay it off.

"I think it's an excellent plan to pay it off, but I think that you're a fool if you don't worry about it," Geiger said. "It's not a slam-dunk. We need to have a good team and sell all the tickets. There's rather extraordinary pressure to be successful."

And the worst case scenario if the team isn't successful?

"We wouldn't sell the seats, and the debt would be hard to pay off," he said.

Crawford then asked Geiger if there were any alternate scenarios to paying off the debt?

"There is no alternative," Geiger said. "Obviously you can't default, so other resources would have to be found, and that's a difficult thing."

Would money come from the academic side to make up any shortfall?

"That's just not possible. That's just not possible," Geiger repeated. "So the option is that we're going to be successful."

I think most Buckeye fans would be fine with that option.

For the complete text of Crawford's

interview with Geiger, which ran in the Feb. 16 issue, log on to Business First's web site at Columbus.bcentral.com/columbus.

More Than Football Conference

Some of you may have seen a recent graphic in USA Today showing the schools with the most NCAA Division I individual men's swimming championships. Michigan led the way with 145, followed by Stanford with 119 and Ohio State with 117. Southern Cal was next at 100 and Indiana was fifth with 79.

When one thinks of swimming I think one tends to think of states like Florida and California. Thus, I found it interesting that three of the top five schools in terms of swimming champions were from the Big Ten.

Videos Coming

We are about to finish dubbing what I hope will be our final batch of Archie Griffin videos. The demand for this video was so high that this is the second time we have had to print more of them. If you have not received your video yet, it should be in this batch, which we will be mailing soon.

Thanks for your patience. This promotion, part of our 20th anniversary celebration, was one of our most successful promotions ever. Keep watching for details on other exciting promotions surrounding our ongoing 20th anniversary celebration.

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