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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Dec. 2, 2017



Next Man Up

Haskins Leads Buckeyes To Comeback Win In Ann Arbor

JOSH WINSLOW

OFF THE BENCH – Backup quarterback Dwayne Haskins (7) entered Ohio State's game against Michigan in the third quarter when the Buckeyes trailed, 20-14, before guiding the team to a comeback win.

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By **TIM MOODY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Imagine the most critical situation the Ohio State football team could face during a regular-season game.

There might be various responses to that prompt, but a scenario where the Buckeyes are trailing in the second half against Michigan would probably come to mind. Throw in an injured fifth-year senior quarterback being replaced by a redshirt freshman playing his first meaningful snaps, and you've got a pretty dire situation.

That's exactly what Dwayne Haskins faced when he entered Ohio State's game at Michigan in the third quarter Nov. 25 with the Buckeyes trailing, 20-14.

The moment was monumental. Ohio State (10-2, 8-1 Big Ten) had its season on the line. The thing is, Haskins wasn't thinking about the score. He wasn't thinking about the situation. He wasn't thinking about three-time team captain J.T. Barrett, who had just left the game with an apparent right knee injury – nobody knew if Barrett would return.

Haskins was thinking about making sure he

clapped loud enough. That's the first thing fifth-year senior center and team captain Billy Price told him, after all.

"I forgot we were down. I was in the game," Haskins said. "First thing I get told by Bill was, 'Clap loud.' So I just forgot we were down by anything."



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When Haskins, a Potomac, Md., native, entered the game, the Buckeyes were facing a third-and-1 at their own 31. With the backup QB in the game, Ohio State opted to keep it simple at first, as Haskins handed off to freshman running back J.K. Dobbins, who moved the chains with a 4-yard run.

"After that first handoff, I think it was J.K. got the first down, I was like, 'All right, we've got the ball rolling now, it's first down, actually can start the drive,'" Haskins said. "After that play it was like, 'Let's keep moving, let's go score the ball.'" That's exactly what the Buckeyes did, and Haskins played a big role in the drive.

Ohio State eventually drove down to the Michigan 43-yard line, setting up third-and-3. After consecutive false starts, though, that turned

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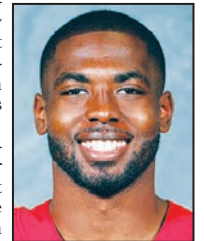
Barrett Becomes 1st QB To Go 4-0 In 'The Game' Despite Freak Pregame Injury

By **TIM MOODY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

J.T. Barrett's career against Michigan ended the way it began in more ways than one.

First off, and more importantly for Barrett and the Buckeyes, his tenure as Ohio State's starting quarterback in The Game was capped with a victory against the Wolverines. That's how it began as well when the then-redshirt freshman from Wichita Falls, Texas, guided his team to a 42-28 win over Michigan in Columbus in 2014.

On Nov. 25 in Ann Arbor, Barrett again started for Ohio State against Michigan, and once again, the Buckeyes were victorious, 31-20. The victory made Barrett the first quarterback in the history of the rivalry – on either side – to go 4-0 as a starter.



J.T. Barrett

The 2017 win was different for the fifth-year senior, though, but it wasn't completely unlike the win in 2014. Back in his first experience playing in The Game, Barrett suffered a broken ankle in the second half, ruling him out for the rest of the season. That time around, the Buckeyes were already in command as Cardale Jones came in to finish off the win.

This year, Barrett was once again unable to finish the game.

After Michigan scored a touchdown with 7:07 left in the third quarter to go ahead, 20-14, the Buckeyes took over at their own 22 after a 12-yard kick return by sophomore running back Mike Weber. Barrett rushed for a loss of 1 on first down before picking up 10 on second. But after that carry, the Buckeyes' only three-time team captain stayed on the Michigan Stadium turf before eventually being helped up and making his way straight to the locker room with a heavy limp.

At the time, it seemed like an in-play injury, but after the game head coach Urban Meyer revealed there was much more to the story.

"I'm just so upset with myself – it was a non-football injury," Meyer said in his postgame press conference. "Too many damn people on the sideline and a guy with a camera hit him in the knee. I'm going to find out who."

After a win, especially a road win against Michigan that moved the Buckeyes to 10-2 (8-1

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OPINION

Harbaugh Has Right Approach To 'The Game'

Full disclosure: I'm not Jim Harbaugh's biggest fan. I don't like his look-at-me persona, I don't like his sideline histrionics and I'm not sure his record at the University of San Diego, Stanford and Michigan qualify him to be among the top three or four highest-paid coaches in college football.

All of that said, I must give credit where credit is due. I admire Harbaugh for his approach to the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry and the healthy respect he obviously has for The Game.

While it is true that Harbaugh is now winless in his first three games in the series as Michigan head coach, it is obvious that he has restored a sense of pride to his players – the kind of pride one can truly feel only if his head coach understands the historic significance of such a rivalry series.

To be perfectly honest, it wasn't much fun watching Ohio State beat up on the teams that were fielded by Rich Rodriguez and Brady Hoke. A rivalry ceases to be much of a rivalry when one team enters the game confident of victory. It must have been the same way for Michigan back when John Cooper was coaching at Ohio State.

Rodriguez grew up in West Virginia, played for the Mountaineers and later coached at his alma mater. What did he know about The Game other than what others might have told him? Likewise, Coop was born in Tennessee, played at Iowa State and spent much of his coaching career west of the Mississippi River. He could hardly have been expected to know scarlet and gray from maize and blue when he arrived in Columbus, and his record in the series pretty much attests to that.

Hoke at least had a working knowledge of the OSU-Michigan game since his father was a teammate of Bo Schmebeckler when both played for Woody Hayes at Miami (Ohio). Still, the younger Hoke had something of a warped relationship with the rivalry – he grew up in Ohio but cheered for Michigan and eventually played his college football in Indiana at Ball State.

Is it any wonder why the three aforementioned coaches were a collective 3-16-1 in the series? If you don't get what the series means, you don't win. It's as simple as that.

There's no question that Urban Meyer and Jim Harbaugh understand the rivalry and all of its intrinsic ramifications that include everything from recruiting to bragging rights to out-and-out pride.

Before you criticize Harbaugh too much for the way his team squandered a 14-0 lead before losing a 31-20 decision to the Buckeyes, remember just how much talent the Wolverines lost from last year's team that rose as high as No. 2 in the national rankings before finishing with a 10-3 record that included a three-point loss in double overtime to Ohio State and a one-point loss to Florida State in the Orange Bowl.

The Wolverines had to find replacements for 17 starters, including 10 on defense, and then lost starting quarterback Wilton Speight to a season-ending back injury in late September. Still, Michigan put together an 8-2 record heading into its final two games of the season before running into Wisconsin and Ohio State – teams that are simply deeper in talent and experience than the Wolverines.

Yet Michigan stayed with the Badgers for a half before running out of gas and then did the same against the Buckeyes, going so far as to take total control of the first quarter with a nothing-to-lose attitude that caught Ohio State looking like an unprepared bunch that was still mentally back at the team hotel, rolling over and reaching for the snooze button.

Like him or not, Harbaugh somehow coaxed whatever juice was left from a team whose emotional tank was on empty. The Wolverines, who looked fully engaged from the outset, had an excellent game plan that appeared to be a copy of the strategy utilized by Iowa when the Hawkeyes upset the Buckeyes earlier in November. As a result, the Wolverines enjoyed that 14-0 lead just three seconds into the second quarter and had by that time accumulated 108 total yards while the OSU offense was in full retreat with minus-6 yards.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

At the same time Harbaugh and his team were exhibiting a take-no-prisoners attitude, the Buckeyes were the exact opposite. They dropped passes and committed mental as well as physical mistakes, seemingly spending way too much time thinking and not enough time doing. There was no up-tempo attack offensively, poor tackling on defense, and what appeared to be the dreaded play-not-to-lose mentality.

But you know what? This was a rivalry game with all the post-Thanksgiving Day trimmings, and all that talk you always hear about throwing out the records of the respective teams – well, that's not just talk. Between 1969 and 2004, the higher ranked team was just 16-16-2 in the OSU-Michigan series. It isn't easy heading into The Game when the oddsmakers expect you to win – especially if you're protecting some kind of unprecedented winning streak.

Just as badly as the Michigan players want to end Ohio State's current streak of excellence, the OSU players want just as badly to preserve it, and I think that is probably the reason the Buckeyes looked tighter than a new pair of dress shoes to start the game.

But while I'm crediting Harbaugh with creating an atmosphere that allowed his team to hang tough, I also have to credit Urban Meyer for not pushing the panic button after his team fell into a 14-0 hole and then lost starting quarterback J.T. Barrett with his team trailing by a 20-14 margin late in the third quarter.

Rising To The Occasion

As long as I'm praising the coaches on each sideline, players on both sides of the ball also distinguished themselves.

OSU redshirt freshman Dwayne Haskins came off the bench to relieve Barrett and direct three scoring drives. It would have been four if not for a missed field goal. Meanwhile, Michigan QB John O'Korn missed badly on a handful of throws and was sacked five times, but he most definitely kept his team in the game by throwing for 195 yards and a touchdown.

Rotating tailbacks J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber pounded away at the Michigan defense and combined for 158 yards and two touchdowns. Meanwhile, Chris Evans and Karan Higdon did virtually the same thing for the Wolverines, combining 22 carries for 122 yards and a touchdown.

There was OSU center Billy Price with a big block on Michigan star linebacker Devin Bush to spring Dobbins on a long run. There was defensive end Rashan Gary for Michigan registering 10 tackles with three tackles for

loss and a pair of sacks, while Ohio State counterpart Sam Hubbard totaled 2½ sacks among his five total stops.

Ohio State cornerback Denzel Ward came up with a team-best eight tackles, broke up two passes and blocked the extra point after Michigan's third touchdown, exploding around the end to get a hand on the kick for his second block of the season. His first came on the fourth-quarter punt against Penn State that touched off the Buckeyes' come-from-behind victory Oct. 28 against the Nittany Lions.

And how in the world did OSU receiver Austin Mack hang onto that crucial third-down strike from Haskins while absorbing a brutal hit from Wolverines free safety Tyree Kinnel? Not only was it a gutsy catch, but Mack's 27-yard reception against tight coverage from Kinnel and Michigan cornerback Brandon Watson converted a third-and-13 situation and sustained a touchdown drive that put the Buckeyes ahead for good.

Mistakes, hard hits, bad breaks, blown assignments, spectacular efforts – it's all part of The Game and a series that began Oct. 16, 1897. Since then, the series has borne witness to the likes of Chic Harley and Tom Harmon, Woody, Bo and The Ten-Year War, a two-time Heisman Trophy winner, a Heisman pose in the end zone, hundreds of All-Americans, countless breathless moments, fantastic finishes and at least one contest branded "The Game of the Century."

All I could possibly add is mark your calendars for Nov. 24, 2018, and the 115th renewal because it's not just the greatest rivalry in college football. It's the greatest rivalry in all of sports.

Murky Playoff Picture

There are plenty of scenarios being offered regarding the College Football Playoff, and I have one, too. Mine is a little different, though, because I don't believe Auburn's 26-14 win against top-ranked Alabama hurts Ohio State's chances. In fact, just the opposite might be true.

Everyone knows a one-loss Ohio State team got one of the four playoff berths last year despite not playing in the Big Ten Championship Game. This year, Alabama is another one-loss team that will not appear in its conference's title game. However, that's where the similarities end.

First and foremost, the Crimson Tide lost their final regular-season game this year while the Buckeyes rattled off five consecutive victories – including two against top-10 opponents – to gather a head of steam heading into last year's postseason.

Secondly – and stay with me on this one – Ohio State getting into the playoff last year might actually hurt Alabama this year. The Buckeyes got waxed by a 31-0 final against eventual national champion Clemson, an embarrassing outcome the selection committee might not want to chance again. Also, if Auburn beats Georgia in the SEC title game, the Tigers will undoubtedly get a playoff spot, and the committee has never chosen two teams from the same conference.

Therefore, I believe the opportunity remains for Ohio State to get to the playoff provided it can find a way to beat Wisconsin.

In addition to never selecting two teams from the same conference, the CFP selection committee has never before invited a two-loss team. That seems destined to change this year, so it's also worth remembering that in the previous three seasons of the present playoff format, a team from the Big Ten has always occupied one of the four spots.

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Charter Member

COVER STORY

Haskins Entered Game With OSU Trailing, 20-14

Continued From Page 1

into third-and-13, and the Buckeyes had no choice but to trust in Haskins' arm.

He took the third-down snap and dropped back, eventually throwing toward the right sideline into tight coverage. The throw beat the defense, and sophomore wide receiver Austin Mack – Haskins' roommate – made the catch for 27 yards and a first down.

"Somebody had to make a play," Mack said. "They called an isolation pass to me, a fade route, and I went up and made a play."

Two plays later Haskins scrambled for 22 yards, coming up just short of a touchdown. But Dobbins cleaned it up, forcing his way in from the 1-yard line to put the Buckeyes ahead, 21-20.

By the end of the game, Haskins had led the Buckeyes to 10 more points, helped along by a few key third-down pass completions, and a 31-20 victory in Ann Arbor.

He finished the game with six completions on seven attempts for 94 yards, and perhaps most importantly, the Buckeyes didn't turn the ball over with him in the game. After Haskins took the field, Ohio State outscored the Wolverines, 17-0.

"He took care of the ball," head coach Urban Meyer said of Haskins. "That was the No. 1 thing, he took care of the ball."

And it all happened just a week after Haskins had a fumble returned for a touchdown in the Buckeyes' 52-14 win over Illinois



JOSH WINSLOW

CLUTCH CATCH – Austin Mack (11) made a key 27-yard reception on third-and-13 on Dwayne Haskins' first drive at quarterback.

on Nov. 18. After that fumble, Haskins was pulled as Meyer put the starters back in the game to avoid a potential "clown show."

"There's a lot of credit that needs to go to his preparation," Price said of Haskins. "He's

very cool when he's back there. The kid is a gifted, freak athlete. If you saw what he did on third-and-13, as a 19- or 20-year-old young man, that's incredible.

"I told him, 'Hey, just trust the offensive

line, just make your decisions and don't turn the ball over.'"

While none of his teammates admitted to having doubts when Haskins took the field, it would be safe to assume that nobody knew what to expect. That includes the quarterback himself, who admitted after the game that he surprised himself with his own comfort level.

"It was really unreal, honestly," Haskins said. "You'd think that you'd be nervous, and honestly, I wasn't. I had the O-line. I had the receivers. Billy and everybody else was behind me the entire way and I got the snap and we were just moving the ball down the field, play by play, it happened."

With the regular season in the rearview mirror, Haskins had played in eight of the Buckeyes' 12 games. He completed 40 of 57 passes for 565 yards and four touchdowns to one interception, which was returned for a touchdown during Ohio State's win over UNLV.

Going forward, Haskins will likely resume his role as Barrett's understudy after Barrett said he'd be ready to go for the Big Ten Championship Game against Wisconsin on Dec. 2.

But, after his performance against Michigan, the Buckeyes know they have a backup quarterback with the ability to go in and make the plays necessary to win if called upon.

"It's not just a one-night thing, it's a whole year," Mack said of his roommate. "He's being a pro. Dwayne takes that, the edge, the seriousness to the game so that when that time comes and his number is called, he can be able to produce."

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COVER STORY

Barrett Exits In 3rd Quarter In Final Michigan Game

Continued From Page 1

Big Ten) on the season, the head coach would typically be ecstatic. But after the game Meyer was anything but. He was visibly frustrated as he attempted to break down the game, but Meyer, who improved to 6-0 in The Game, kept coming back to the freak injury.

"Imagine someone on your freaking sideline hurt your quarterback," he said. "I'll find out who that was."

Barrett explained that the initial injury occurred before he had even stepped on the field. While the Buckeyes were forcing Michigan into a punt on the first defensive series of the game, Barrett was behind his team's bench warming up.

At some point, someone on the crowded sideline – Meyer believed it was a photographer – tried to squeeze between Barrett and a cart, bumping into the quarterback's right knee in the process.

"It bumped me and my knee kind of shifted in, which has happened before," Barrett said.

He noted that he experienced a similar situation during Ohio State's season opener against Indiana. He's had issues at other times as well, but he was usually able to "unlock" his knee without the assistance of trainers.

Before the game, the Buckeyes got his knee unlocked, as Barrett put it, and he was able to start.

"J.T. said he was fine," fifth-year senior center Billy Price said. "If something was bothering him, you couldn't tell. He is such a true warrior and a true leader that he didn't allow it to affect his play."

But the early going was tough for Ohio State. After the teams traded punts to open the proceedings, Michigan embarked on a 13-play, 77-yard drive that was capped by a 2-yard touchdown plunge from Khalid Hill, giving the Wolverines a 7-0 lead.

On the second-to-last play of the opening frame, Michigan freshman wide receiver Donovan Peoples-Jones – a one-time Ohio State recruit – returned a punt 42 yards, and with a holding call against the Buckeyes



JOSH WINSLOW

EARLY EXIT – Quarterback J.T. Barrett (16) did not return after aggravating a right knee injury in the third quarter against Michigan.

tacked on, the Wolverines took over at the OSU 5-yard line. On the first snap of the second quarter, Michigan made it 14-0 when fifth-year senior quarterback John O'Korn hit tight end Sean McKeon for a 3-yard touchdown.

At the time, Michigan had gained 105 total yards on 23 offensive plays. The Buckeyes had minus-6 yards on nine first-quarter plays, marking the first time since 2010 that Ohio State had lost yardage in a quarter.

That's when Barrett, who was showing no signs of the pregame injury, and the Ohio State offense turned it on. On the ensuing drive, the Buckeyes marched 75 yards in 11 plays, capped by a 21-yard touchdown scramble by Barrett.

After another Michigan punt, it took just three plays for Barrett to find tight end

Marcus Baugh for a 25-yard strike to tie the game.

From there, neither team scored until Michigan made it 20-14 in the third, and then Barrett aggravated the injury. He finished the game with three completions on eight attempts for 30 yards and a score while carrying the ball 15 times for 67 yards and another touchdown.

With Barrett out, the Buckeyes turned to redshirt freshman Dwayne Haskins, who guided Ohio State to two more touchdowns and a field goal to cement the victory (a full breakdown of Haskins' heroics can be found on the cover of this issue).

"To think they scored after a punt return on the 5-freaking-yardline," Meyer said. "So our defense played well, our kickoff team played well, but it was a street

fight and we hung in there and found a way to win."

While he wasn't on the field in the final moments, Barrett gets his credit for the win. The victory made him 36-6 as Ohio State's starter, tying him with Art Schlichter for the most wins in school history. He also became just the second player in FBS history to throw for 100 or more touchdowns and rush for 40 or more scores in a career – 102 and 40, respectively – joining Central Michigan legend Dan LeFevour (102 passing, 47 rushing).

Barrett's record at Ohio State is set in stone. His name is plastered all over the school record books and likely will be for some time. What exactly happened to him at Michigan Stadium on Nov. 25, though, is less clear.

While Barrett had an idea of what happened, he didn't know who bumped him, or what exactly made contact with his knee. But he was pretty sure the culprit wanted to distance himself from the situation.

"I didn't really see a camera," Barrett said. "I mean, I remember he was wearing something gray and he just continued to walk. I'm pretty sure he got a little nervous but, yeah. That's what happened."

Barrett seemed lighthearted about the incident, even standing up from his table at the press conference to give a hands-on demonstration of what happened. Meyer, on the other hand, was furious.

"It's an all-out investigation," he said. When Meyer was asked if he thought the incident could have been intentional, he simply said, "I don't know."

Barrett, when asked the same question, was a bit more sure, saying, "No, I don't know. I mean, I hope not. I don't think it's that type of rivalry where you do that. Nah."

After the game, it was not clear exactly what happened. In the long run, it might not even matter. The Buckeyes got the win to cap the regular season, sending them into the Dec. 2 Big Ten Championship Game against Wisconsin on a high note.

As for Barrett's status for that showdown in Indianapolis?

"I'll play next week," he said.

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Ohio State Defense Stiffens After 1st Quarter

Things weren't looking too bright for the Ohio State defense during the first quarter of the game against Michigan on Nov. 25. Playing in Ann Arbor, the Buckeyes surrendered 105 yards of total offense (54 passing, 51 rushing) and allowed the Wolverines to pick up five first downs, which included converting 4 of 6 third-down situations, in the first 15 minutes alone.

GAME NOTEBOOK
Ryan McClade

Michigan gashed OSU for a 13-play, 77-yard touchdown drive that took 5:46 off the first-quarter clock. The scoring march included three third-down conversions, the final one being a 13-yard pass from quarterback John O'Korn to sophomore running back Chris Evans to the Ohio State 2-yard line on a third-and-11. The Wolverines punched it in two plays later on a 2-yard carry by fifth-year senior fullback Khalid Hill.

It should be noted that the Ohio State punt team didn't help the defense's cause. Punting from his end zone late in the first quarter, redshirt freshman Drue Chrisman booted the ball 46 yards. It was negated, though, when freshman Donovan Peoples-Jones returned it 42 yards and an additional 6 yards were tacked on to the end of the run because of holding penalty on OSU's Elijah Goins.

With the Michigan drive starting at the Ohio State 5, the Buckeye defense didn't have much room for error. The Wolverines cashed in on the prime field position on the



JOSH WINSLOW

QUIETING THE CROWD – Ohio State defensive end Sam Hubbard finished The Game with 2½ sacks.

first play of the second quarter to take a 14-0 lead.

After that second touchdown, a seemingly different Ohio State defense took the field for the remainder of the contest. The Buckeyes held the Wolverines, who produced 108 yards of total offense through the first 15:03, to 187 yards over the final 44:57. Michigan finished with 100 yards rushing, accruing just 49 yards in the last three quarters.

"I feel like we came out and played extremely hard," said OSU fifth-year senior defensive end Tyquan Lewis, who had half a sack for a 5-yard loss. "We knew in the first quarter we had to start making adjustments to stop the run."

Michigan mustered just 41 yards of total offense in the second quarter, 68 in the third and 81 in the fourth to finish with 295 for the game. The Silver Bullets gave up only one more touchdown the rest of the way, as Ohio State completed the 31-20 comeback victory.

"Our defense, we just kept hanging in there," said OSU head coach Urban Meyer. "To think they scored after a punt return on the 5-freaking-yard line. Our defense played well. We held them to under 300 total yards."

O'Korn, who missed a handful of wide-open targets, said Michigan should have

blown out Ohio State if it had capitalized on chances.

"Just my personal opinion, I think we got a little complacent," he said. "As players, I think we left the foot off the gas. This game didn't have to be close. We could have run away with it. We had plenty of opportunities and we just didn't take advantage."

Following the win, Ohio State fifth-year senior linebacker Chris Worley, who finished with six tackles, was asked if he had any doubt after his team got behind, 14-0.

"I never have doubt," he said.

OSU Offense Warms Up After Slow Start

As poorly as the Ohio State defense played in the first quarter, the offense had an even worse start. The Buckeyes possessed the ball for just 4:32 and ran a total of nine plays that amounted to minus-6 yards.

The Scarlet and Gray found success, particularly on the ground, over the final three stanzas, however, and ended the game with 350 yards of total offense, including 226 yards rushing.

"The big thing is you've got to establish the inside run, establish the run between the tackles because that helps the pass game and it helps the outside run game," OSU fifth-year senior center Billy Price said of what changed with the offense. "We're going to rely on our outside run game. (Michigan), they actually did some incredible things on defense."

"A lot of respect and credit goes to them because that forced us to change our game plan and go inside, which put the game on the offensive line to go get those tough 4- or 5-yard gains rather than just trying to hit the home run all of the time. A lot of credit to our coaches for making the changes. We trust them."

Three of Ohio State's touchdowns came via the run. Fifth-year senior quarterback J.T. Barrett opened the scoring for the Buckeyes with a 21-yard scamper with just less than 10 minutes remaining until halftime. Freshman running back J.K. Dobbins then gave Ohio State its first lead of the game, 21-20, with a 1-yard plunge late in the

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

For the third straight week, the rushing attack showed up. Michigan's defense came to play early on, holding Ohio State's offense scoreless in the first quarter, but the Buckeyes didn't panic despite the 14-0 deficit. When OSU trailed by a 20-14 count midway through the third quarter, the offensive staff stuck with what worked, and that was the run game. Instead of a pivot to a pass-heavy approach, co-offensive coordinators Kevin Wilson and Ryan Day gave the ball to running backs J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber, pounding the rock down the throats of the Wolverines to wear them down throughout the second half. Dobbins, who eclipsed the century mark with 15 carries for 101 yards, put Ohio State ahead on his 1-yard plunge late in the third quarter. As the Buckeyes began to create separation, Weber (12 carries, 57 yards) pulled off the dagger on his 25-yard scamper late in the fourth quarter, and it was symbolic of the way OSU ran away with The Game.

What Didn't Work

When Michigan jumped out to its initial 14-0 lead, Ohio State's defense had flashbacks to the Nov. 4 loss at Iowa. In that 31-point blowout, the Hawkeyes overwhelmed the Buckeyes in the passing game with their tight ends and running backs, and the Wolverines appeared to have copied that blueprint. With the way a below-average quarterback John O'Korn was able to use running backs such as Chris Evans (five catches, 34 yards) out of the backfield on the opening scoring drive before he found tight end Sean McKeon for a 3-yard touchdown pass on the next scoring possession,

OSU's back seven looked dazed and confused, the same way they did at Iowa. Ohio State buckled down from there, holding U-M to six points after the game opened up with a 14-0 hole and cause for concern. However, if Michigan had a better quarterback than what O'Korn put on display with his constant missing of open targets, this could have been catastrophic.

Play Of The Game

When fifth-year senior quarterback J.T. Barrett exited midway through the third quarter with a game-ending injury to his right knee, Ohio State turned to Dwayne Haskins off the bench, and the redshirt freshman delivered. In the face of 112,028 at Michigan Stadium with the Buckeyes down 20-14, Haskins didn't blink. During that first drive, he fed off the momentum the run game brought, but his team still needed him to deliver with his arm. On a third-and-13 from the OSU 47, Haskins did just that. The 6-3, 214-pounder dropped back to pass and delivered a rocket to sophomore wide receiver Austin Mack between an airtight window of two defenders. Mack absorbed a brutal hit from Tyree Kinnel to hang on, moving Ohio State deep into Michigan territory. After Haskins showed off his legs two plays later on a broken-play scramble for 22 yards to bring the Buckeyes down near the goal line, Dobbins did the rest on a 1-yard dive for the touchdown to give OSU its first lead of the day at 21-20 with 1:34 left in the third quarter. Ohio State didn't look back after that, and neither did Haskins.

— Garrett Stepien

third. Third-year sophomore tailback Mike Weber's 25-yard dash with 1:44 left in the game iced the win.

Dobbins led the team with 101 yards rushing on 15 carries, a 6.7-yard average. Barrett, who also completed a 25-yard touchdown pass over the middle to fifth-year senior tight end Marcus Baugh, was second with 67 yards on 15 totes (4.5-yard average). Weber used 12 attempts to gain 57 yards (4.8-yard average).

With the running game excelling, Ohio State was judicious about attacking through the air. The Buckeyes threw the ball only 15 times, completing nine passes for 124 yards. In addition to the offensive line paving the way for the ground attack, Meyer credited first-year co-offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Ryan Day for the offense's turnaround against a Michigan defense that had ranked No. 3 nationally (261.2 yards per game), No. 1 against the pass (144.4 ypg) and No. 15 against the run (116.8 ypg) heading into the meeting.

"The offensive line started blocking them," Meyer said. "The tailbacks ran really, really hard and then the opportunistic passing. Ryan Day has been studying, he studied this team for — really all year. And called a very nice game as far as some of the throws. We ran for 226 yards and that's a hell of a day against that defense."

Michigan sophomore defensive end Rashan Gary said he and his teammates weren't caught off guard by OSU's play-calling. It was simply a matter of not executing.

"To be honest, it was just mistakes on our end," Gary said. "They didn't do anything special. We just failed to stop what we've been practicing and preparing for all week. They didn't show us anything that we didn't

see during practice. That's just not capitalizing on what we knew."

O'Korn Explains Critical INT

With a chance to put Ohio State up by seven points with less than three minutes remaining in the game, Sean Nuernberger's 43-yard field goal sailed wide left. Michigan then took over at its 27-yard line trailing only 24-20 and in perfect position to conduct a game-winning drive that would end a five-game losing streak against the Buckeyes.

On the Wolverines' first play, though, O'Korn threw a pass well over the head of sophomore wide receiver Kekoa Crawford and into the waiting arms of sophomore safety Jordan Fuller for an interception.

"It was an option route," O'Korn said, referring to what went wrong on the pick. "(Crawford) did the right thing. It was all on me. It's one of those ones that you just see it wrong. As soon as the ball is in the air you wish you could have it back and you know what the result is going to be. But you can't change it."

Ohio State scored on Weber's 25-yard scamper three plays later, guaranteeing O'Korn would finish his Michigan career without a win against the Buckeyes.

"The hardest part for me is you come here to win this game and our senior class wasn't able to do it," an emotional O'Korn said after the loss. "I hold myself responsible for a lot of that."

Weber Scores Backbreaker Vs. U-M

That touchdown run by Weber was

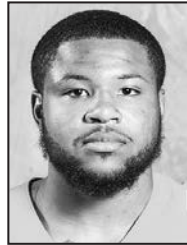
probably gratifying to him on multiple levels.

Weber played high school football at Detroit Cass Tech, located roughly 42 miles east of Ann Arbor. He committed to Michigan in August 2014. In November of that same year, though, he decommitted from the Wolverines before pledging to Ohio State that December and signing with the Buckeyes a couple of months later.

Weber, who redshirted his first season on campus, ran for 1,096 yards last fall and was named the Big Ten Freshman of the Year. He also became the third Ohio State running back in school history to run for more than 1,000 yards as a freshman, joining Robert Smith (1990) and Maurice Clarett (2002).

Against the Wolverines in 2016, Weber had only 26 yards on 11 carries, but he managed to find the end zone once to help Ohio State complete the 30-27 double-overtime comeback victory. His latest performance vs. the school he originally committed to could not have made Meyer happier.

"It was great," the head coach said. "I love Mike Weber. I have a lot of respect for Mike Weber, how he's grown up. That was a little bit of a leap of faith to come join a rival and he's — he's a grown man. He came to us a non-grown man — I'm not being disrespectful, but he's really done a nice job."



Mike Weber

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Buckeyes Overcome Deficit, Injuries In 'The Game'

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State would not be denied. Not when its offense went backward in the first quarter. Not when the No. 9 Buckeyes trailed by two touchdowns early. And not when star fifth-year senior quarterback J.T. Barrett left the game with an injury in the third quarter and Michigan poised for the another upset in the storied rivalry.

Ohio State overcame all the adversity to beat the Wolverines 31-20 on Nov. 25 in Ann Arbor for its sixth straight win in the series and 15th victory in the last 17 meetings since 2001.

As was the case in the 2014 Michigan game, Barrett got hurt. After this year's game it was revealed that Barrett had aggravated a right knee injury when he was bumped on the sideline, allegedly by a photographer, while warming up for the Buckeyes' first series.

He played through the discomfort into the third quarter. This time it was redshirt freshman Dwayne Haskins, not Cardale Jones, to the rescue with the Buckeyes trailing 20-14.

Haskins led OSU (10-2, 8-1 Big Ten) to the go-ahead run by freshman J.K. Dobbins, a field goal by Sean Nuernberger and a late insurance touchdown by Michigan native Mike Weber with 1:44 remaining to silence all but the OSU fans among the 112,028 in Michigan Stadium on a mild (47 degrees) post-Thanksgiving Saturday.

"It's crazy to go win the biggest rivalry in sports," Haskins said. "I never thought it would actually be a reality."



JOSH WINSLOW

UNDEFEATED – Fifth-year senior center Billy Price (54) finished his career against Michigan with five pairs of Gold Pants.

The Buckeyes next play Dec. 2 in the Big Ten Championship Game vs. Wisconsin in Indianapolis.

Michigan led 14-0 one play into the second quarter before OSU stormed back for a

14-14 halftime tie. The Wolverines (8-4, 5-4) took a 20-14 lead in the third before OSU rallied to run coach Urban Meyer's record vs. the Wolverines to 6-0 and enable Barrett to become the first starting QB for either side in the legendary rivalry to go 4-0.

"We hung in there for four quarters," Meyer said. "Name a rivalry when it's not like that."

Michigan's Jim Harbaugh has lost all three games vs. OSU as the Wolverines' coach.

Barrett had 15 carries for 67 yards and a touchdown. He was 3 for 8 passing for 30 yards and a TD. Haskins was 6 for 7 for 94 yards and ran three times for 24 yards.

Dobbins had 101 yards and a score on 15 rushes, and Weber gained 57 yards on 12 totes, including the 25-yarder to ice the game late in the fourth quarter.

Also, K.J. Hill had two catches for a team-high 53 yards and Marcus Baugh had one grab that went for a 25-yard TD.

U-M quarterback John O'Korn was 17 for 32 for 195 yards with a TD and a pick. Chris Evans led the Michigan ball carriers with 67 yards on 11 carries, and Karan Higdon ran for a TD among 55 rushing yards.

OSU had the edge in first downs, 17-16, and outgained the Wolverines 350-295. U-M had more yards through the air (195-124) but the Buckeyes were superior on the ground (226-100).

Denzel Ward topped the Buckeyes with seven solo tackles, eight total, and also blocked a point after touchdown kick. Sam Hubbard was credited with 2½ of OSU's five sacks.

How It Happened

Michigan took a 7-0 lead with 6:02 left in the first quarter on its second possession when Khalid Hill ran in from the 2. The Wolverines had four first downs on the 13-play, 77-yard march with Evans turning in a 24-yard run and O'Korn completing a 27-yard pass to Zach Gentry to key the drive.

Meanwhile, the Buckeyes' first three series resulted in minus-11 total yards. On the second-to-last play of the quarter, Michigan's Donovan Peoples-Jones made a 42-yard punt return, and a holding call on

OSU during the runback gave U-M first-and-goal at the 5.

The Wolverines had an untimed play and Higdon ran for 2 yards to end the quarter, one in which the Buckeyes were outgained 105 yards to minus-6. O'Korn tossed a 3-yard TD pass to tight end Sean McKeon for a 14-0 lead three seconds into the second quarter.

OSU responded with a long drive that featured Barrett. He picked up the Buckeyes' initial first down on a 6-yard rush on a third-and-2 from the Ohio State 33. Dobbins burst through for 17 yards on the next play. Barrett ran three more times on the drive for 19 yards.

Later, Barrett appeared to score on a 16-yard keeper, but a delay of game pushed the line of scrimmage back to the 21. No problem. Barrett had to scramble out of the pocket on the ensuing snap and raced down the right sideline for the TD to make it 14-7 with 9:50 left before the half.

After forcing a punt that allowed Hill's 11-yard return to the OSU 47, the Buckeyes needed only three plays to tie the score at 14-14 with 5:54 remaining. Weber ran for 2, Barrett rushed 26 yards to the Michigan 25, and then the quarterback hit an uncovered Baugh down the middle for the score.

Michigan regained the lead, 20-14, with 7:07 left in the third quarter when Higdon ran it in from the 2 on third down after Kekoa Crawford had put the Wolverines in business at the OSU 8 with a 43-yard reception. However, Ward blocked the extra point.

Barrett injured his knee running for a 10-yard gain to the OSU 31 to set up a third-and-1 with 6:15 left in the third quarter. Haskins came in and handed off to Dobbins for a 4-yard gain and the first down. Later in the same series, senior left tackle Jamarco Jones exited with an injury.

Haskins guided the Buckeyes to a 21-20 lead with 1:34 remaining in the third quarter. Facing a third-and-13 from the OSU 47 after consecutive false starts, Haskins drilled a 27-yard strike to Austin Mack between two defenders to place the ball at the 26.

"I love all my receivers but I definitely have a special connection with Austin," Haskins said of Mack, who is his roommate. "We had to make a play and it was one-on-one and I'll take my boy any time."

Mack had to leave the game after the violent but legal hit.

Dobbins ran for 3 before Haskins avoided the rush and ran 22 yards to the 1. Dobbins then went behind the blockers for a 1-yard TD. Nuernberger made the PAT to give the Buckeyes their first lead.

Barrett returned to the sidelines, sans helmet, for the next OSU series and watched Haskins take the Buckeyes to the U-M 28 thanks to a 29-yard third-down reception by K.J. Hill. The drive stalled and Nuernberger made a season-long 44-yard field goal for a 24-20 lead with 10:21 to play.

Michigan was then stopped on fourth-and-4 at the OSU 39 with 6:53 left when O'Korn's pass was incomplete. OSU failed to add to the lead when Nuernberger missed a 43-yard field goal with 2:47 to play.

O'Korn on the next play was intercepted by Jordan Fuller. He returned it 11 yards to the OSU 49, but a personal foul on Hubbard during the return moved the Buckeyes back to their 34 with 2:36 left.

Dobbins broke free for 35 yards to the U-M 31. He ran for 6 yards and Weber sealed the win with a 25-yard TD run with 1:44 left to make it 31-20.

Michigan got the ball one last time, but the game ended with Hubbard's 6-yard sack of O'Korn at the OSU 41.

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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 31, Michigan 20

Nov. 25, 2017 – Michigan Stadium; Ann Arbor, Mich.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE (10-2, 8-1 Big Ten)	0	14	7	10	- 31
MICHIGAN (8-4, 5-4 Big Ten)	7	7	6	0	- 20

First Quarter

U-M – Hill, 2 yard run (Nordin kick), 6:02; 13 plays, 77 yards, 5:46 TOP.

Second Quarter

U-M – McKeon, 3 yard pass from O’Korn (Nordin kick), 14:57; 2 plays, 5 yards, 0:03 TOP.
OSU – Barrett, 21 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 9:50; 11 plays, 75 yards, 5:07 TOP.
OSU – Baugh, 25 yard pass from Barrett (Nuernberger kick), 5:54; 3 plays, 53 yards, 1:07 TOP.

Third Quarter

U-M – Higdon, 2 yard run (Nordin kick blocked), 7:07; 4 plays, 51 yards, 2:36 TOP.
OSU – Dobbins, 1 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 1:34; 11 plays, 78 yards, 5:33 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Nuernberger 44 yard field goal, 10:21; 10 plays, 47 yards, 4:29 TOP.
OSU – Weber, 25 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 1:44; 3 plays, 66 yards, 0:52 TOP.

Att. – 112,028.

Weather – Mid-40 degrees, partly cloudy; wind NE 15-20 mph.

Team Statistics

	OSU	U-M
First Downs	17	16
Rushing	11	7
Passing	4	8
Penalty	2	1
Rushes-Yards	48-226	36-100
Passing Yards	124	195
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	9-15-0	17-32-1
Offensive Plays	63	68
Total Net Yards	350	295
Third Down Efficiency	8-16	9-17
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-1
Punts-Avg.	6-45.0	7-41.1
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	1-0
Penalties	9-75	6-50
Time of Possession	31:17	28:43

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – OSU: Dobbins 15-101; Barrett 15-67; Weber 12-57; Haskins 3-24; Campbell 1(-5); TEAM 2(-18). **U-M:** Evans 11-67; Higdon 11-55; Hill 5-11; Mason 1-2; O’Korn 8(-35).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – OSU: Barrett 3-8-0-30-1; Haskins 6-7-0-94-0. **U-M:** O’Korn 17-32-1-195-1.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – OSU: Campbell 3-12; K. Hill 2-53; Dobbins 2-7; Mack 1-27; Baugh 1-25. **U-M:** Evans 5-34; Crawford 2-57; Gentry 2-32; McDoom 2-28; McKeon 2-6; Hill 1-10; Harris 1-10; Perry 1-9; Higdon 1-9.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – OSU: Chrisman 6-45.0-51. **U-M:** Robbins 7-41.1-58.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – OSU: K. Hill 3-27. **U-M:** Peoples-Jones 3-54.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – OSU: Weber 2-27. **U-M:** Thomas 4-56.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – OSU: Nuernberger 43. **U-M:** None.

FORCED FUMBLES – OSU: Hubbard. **U-M:** None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – OSU: None. **U-M:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – OSU: Fuller 1-11. **U-M:** None.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – OSU: Hubbard 2.5-27; Fuller 1.0-7; M. Hill 1.0-6; Bosa 1.0-5; D. Jones 1.0-1; Lewis 0.5-5. **U-M:** Gary 3.0-11; McCray 2.0-3; Winovich 1.5-4; Hill 1.5-3; Hudson 0.5-3; Mone 0.5-1.

Sacks (No.-Yds.) – OSU: Hubbard 2.5-27; M. Hill 1.0-6; Bosa 1.0-5; Lewis 0.5-5. **U-M:** Gary 2.0-9; Winovich 1.0-4.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – OSU: Ward 7-1-8; Borland 4-2-6; Worley 4-2-6; Hubbard 4-1-5; Baker 4-1-5; Bosa 2-3-5; Arnette 3-1-4; Fuller 3-0-3; Webb 3-0-3; D. Jones 1-2-3; Harrison 0-2-2; Holmes 1-0-1; M. Hill 1-0-1; Hilliard 1-0-1; Okudah 1-0-1; Smith 1-0-1; McLaurin 1-0-1; Pryor 1-0-1; Turnure 1-0-1; Sheffield 1-0-1; Sprinkle 1-0-1; Cooper 1-0-1; Lewis 0-1-1. **U-M:** McCray 8-2-10; Gary 5-5-10; Winovich 3-6-9; Metellus 4-2-6; Bush 3-2-5; Mone 1-4-5; Kinnel 3-1-4; Hudson 3-1-4; Hill 2-2-4; Woods 3-0-3; Hurst 1-2-3; Furbush 2-0-2; Watson 2-0-2; Peoples-Jones 1-0-1; Glasgow 1-0-1; Bunting 1-0-1; Marshall 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – OSU: Defense, Mack, J. Jones, Knox, Price, Jordan, Prince, Baugh, Barrett, Dobbins, Campbell, McLaurin, Nuernberger. Defense, Hubbard, Sprinkle, D. Jones, Bosa, Baker, Borland, Worley, Arnette, Fuller, Webb, Ward, Chrisman. Reserves, Haskins, Cornell, Okudah, Riep, Goins, Pryor, Dixon, White, Williamson, Browning, Sheffield, Victor, Holmes, Berry, K. Hill, Cooper, Werner, Weber, Williams, Dever, Smith, Turnure, Harrison, Hilliard, McCullough, Hamilton, Alabi, Lewis, Woidek, Pridgeon, Landers, Burrell, Munford, M. Hill, Taylor, Haubeil. **MICHIGAN:** Defense, Cole, Bredeson, Kugler, Ruiz, Bushell-Beatty, Gentry, Wheatley, O’Korn, Hill, Mason, Poggi, Nordin. Defense, Gary, Hurst, Solomon, Winovich, Bush, McCray, Hudson, Hill, Metellus, Kinnel, Long, Robbins. Reserves, Thomas, Ross, Kelly-Powell, Crawford, Hawkins, Kemp, Harris, Peoples-Jones, Evans, McDoom, Higdon, Samuels, St. Juste, Woods, Hewlett, Watson, Glasgow, Foug, Cheeseman, Uche, Gil, Wangler, Wroblewski, Robinson, Onwenu, Furbush, Spanellis, Runyan, Schoenle, McKeon, Perry, Bunting, Mone, Marshall.

Season Statistics

2017 Game-By-Game

Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Aug. 31 (2) at Indiana	W, 49-21	52,929	
Sept. 9 (2) OKLAHOMA (5)	L, 31-16	109,088	
Sept. 16 (8) ARMY	W, 38-7	108,414	
Sept. 23 (10) UNLV	W, 54-21	106,187	
Sept. 30 (11) at Rutgers	W, 56-0	46,328	
Oct. 7 (10) MARYLAND	W, 62-14	107,180	
Oct. 14 (9) at Nebraska	W, 56-14	89,346	
Oct. 28 (6) PENN STATE (2)	W, 39-38	109,302	
Nov. 4 (6) at Iowa	L, 55-24	67,669	
Nov. 11 (13) MSU (12)	W, 48-3	107,011	
Nov. 18 (9) ILLINOIS	W, 52-14	105,282	
Nov. 25 (9) at Michigan	W, 31-20	112,028	
Dec. 2 vs. Wisconsin#	8:17 p.m.	-	

*OSU’s gameday CFP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent’s ranking is after the name. AP ranking used through Penn State game. # – Big Ten Championship Game at Lucas Oil Stadium (Indianapolis).

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	325	196
Rushing	158	67
Passing	141	101
Penalty	26	28
Average Per Game/Rush	250.3	112.8
Average Per Game/Pass	279.5	179.0
Total Offense	6,358	3,502
Total Plays	906	794
Average Per Game	529.8	291.8
Average Per Play	7.0	4.4
Penalties-Yards	89-865	74-631
Fumbles-Lost	14-7	12-8
Third Down Efficiency	78-157	58-180
Percentage	50%	32%
Fourth Down Efficiency	12-18	11-23
Percentage	67%	48%
Sacks-Yards	34-251	19-109
Time Of Possession Avg.	28:53	31:07

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	129	180	121	95	-	525	43.8
Opponents	45	69	69	55	-	238	19.8

Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Yds.	TD	Long
J.K. Dobbins	164	1190	7.3	7	52
J.T. Barrett	130	672	5.2	9	37
Mike Weber	92	602	6.5	10	82
Antonio Williams	57	290	5.1	3	18
Demario McCall	14	111	7.9	1	48
Parris Campbell	7	90	12.9	1	44
Dwayne Haskins	24	86	3.6	0	22
Jared Drake	3	7	2.3	0	4
Marcus Baugh	1	5	5.0	0	5
Jordan Leasure	1	5	5.0	0	5
K.J. Hill	2	1	0.5	0	1
Joe Burrow	3	-5	-1.7	0	4
TEAM	11	-50	-4.5	0	0
OSU Totals	509	3,004	5.9	31	82
OPP Totals	433	1,354	3.1	11	55

Passing Comp. Att. Pct. Yds. TD-INT Effic.

J.T. Barrett	217	328	66.2	2,728	33-7	165.0
Dwayne Haskins	40	57	70.2	565	4-1	173.1
Joe Burrow	7	11	63.6	61	0-0	110.2
TEAM	0	1	0.0	0	0-0	0.0
OSU Totals	264	397	66.5	3,354	37-8	164.2
OPP Totals	200	361	55.4	2,148	16-10	114.5

Receiving Rec. Net Avg. TD Long

K.J. Hill	51	519	10.2	3	29
Parris Campbell	38	530	13.9	2	74
Terry McLaurin	26	342	13.2	5	33
Binjimen Victor	23	349	15.2	7	48
Marcus Baugh	22	243	11.0	5	31
Austin Mack	21	287	13.7	2	36
J.K. Dobbins	20	130	6.5	1	18
Johnnie Dixon	17	413	24.3	8	70
C.J. Saunders	17	221	13.0	1	50
Mike Weber	9	78	8.7	0	53
Rashod Berry	6	100	16.7	2	38
Antonio Williams	5	25	5.0	0	6
Trevon Grimes	3	20	6.7	0	8
Demario McCall	2	51	25.5	1	35
Jaylen Harris	2	27	13.5	0	16
Luke Farrell	2	19	9.5	0	14
OSU Totals	264	3,354	12.7	37	74
OPP Totals	200	2,148	10.7	16	77

Scoring TD EPK EPR EPRC FG PTS

Sean Nuernberger	-65-65	-	-	-14-17	107
Mike Weber	10	-	-	-	60
J.T. Barrett	9	-	1-2	-	56
J.K. Dobbins	8	-	-	-	48
Johnnie Dixon	8	-	0-1	-	48
Binjimen Victor	7	-	-	-	42
Terry McLaurin	5	-	-	-	30
Marcus Baugh	5	-	-	-	30
K.J. Hill	3	-	-	-	18
Antonio Williams	3	-	-	-	18
Parris Campbell	3	-	-	-	18
Austin Mack	2	-	-	-	12
Demario McCall	2	-	-	-	12
Rashod Berry	2	-	-	-	12
C.J. Saunders	1	-	-	-	6
Jerome Baker	1	-	-	-	6
TEAM (1 safety)	-	-	0-1	-	2
OSU Totals	6965-65	1-4	-	-14-17	525
OPP Totals	3231-32	-	-	-5-10	238

FG Distance 0-29 30-39 40-49 50+ Total

Sean Nuernberger	7-8	6-6	1-3	0-0	14-17
OSU Totals	7-8	6-6	1-3	0-0	14-17
OPP Totals	1-1	4-5	0-2	0-1	5-10

Punting No. Yds. Avg. Bk Long

Drue Chrisman	39	1,705	43.7	0	62
OSU Totals	39	1,705	43.7	0	62
OPP Totals	76	3,192	42.0	1	67

Interceptions No. Yds. Avg. TD Long

Damon Webb	3	47	15.7	0	47
Jordan Fuller	2	51	25.5	0	40
Damon Arnette	2	35	17.5	0	35
Dante Booker	1	0	0.0	0	0
Denzel Ward	1	0	0.0	0	0
Amir Riep	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	10	133	13.3	0	47
OPP Totals	8	132	16.5	2	65

Punt Returns No. Yds. Avg. TD Long

K.J. Hill	22	93	4.2	0	16
Demario McCall	2	6	3.0	0	7
Denzel Ward	1	10	10.0	0	0
Terry McLaurin	1	0	0.0	0	0
Dante Booker	0	6	0.0	0	6
OSU Totals	26	115	4.4	0	16
OPP Totals	4	55	13.8	0	42

Kickoff Returns No. Yds. Avg. TD Long

Parris Campbell	9	329	36.6	0	82
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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 31, Michigan 20

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on fifth-year senior quarterback J.T. Barrett playing through a pregame injury:

"We were worried he wasn't going to be able to. He's one of the toughest guys I've ever been around. (Barrett's right knee) locked up on him before the game. They got it to unlock and then it locked up at the end, and that's what happened."

Barrett, while demonstrating what happened to his knee before entering the game:

"So I'm here warming up - there's a tight spot here, so this is like a cart, right? Like a red cart, I don't know, one of ours. There's a tight spot, it's probably like this (he gestured to represent a tight space) and our bench is over here (behind me). I'm throwing, warming up, and I went to go throw and somebody just tried to squeeze through, I guess not to get close to our bench. Which is, you know, I'm fine, I really don't care as long as you don't hit me, and he hit me. My knee just kind of shifted in, like I said, just twisted up on me and we were able to lock it out before the game. But that's all it was."

Meyer on the emergence of redshirt freshman quarterback Dwayne Haskins off the bench: "Yeah, Dwayne. Wow. ... Dwayne came in and hit that third-and-long pass to (sophomore wide receiver) Austin Mack and had

a couple great crossing routes, handled the ball very well."



Dwayne Haskins

Mack on the confidence level the team has in Haskins if he is needed:

"Oh, all the way. I believe he can do it. He's my roommate, too, so I've got that same confidence."

Haskins on how long he's known he was the true No. 2 quarterback for OSU:

"I've known since the beginning of the season, but we've been competing since last year. We've been going back and forth every day after practice, it was an all-out war and God forbid injury, but (sophomore) Joe (Burrow) got hurt before the season started and I was told I was going to be No. 2. So every practice since then, I was to be prepared to be the guy next."

OSU fifth-year senior linebacker Chris Worley on playing undefeated Wisconsin in the Big Ten Championship Game:

"That's what it's all about. We came in and took care of job assignment No. 1, which was beat The Team Up North. We came out with a win, so now it's time to move onto our next assignment. We'll get back to work."

OSU fifth-year senior defensive end

Tyquan Lewis on getting his fifth pair of gold pants: "This was my last one. I never lost against The Team Up North. It feels great to say that."

OSU fifth-year senior center Billy Price on going 5-0 against Michigan:

"This is a tough and gritty game. You're playing The Team Up North. It's a rivalry. They have a talented front seven, and two guys are highly NFL likely. We had great preparation, and a great work week. ... But you've got to stay focused and understand that when you go into a game like this, there's a lot on the line. That's what makes this a fun rivalry. In the game against The Team Up North, anything can happen, and these games are always great."

Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh on his level of disappointment after having a 14-0 lead:

"I don't know about levels of disappointment. I wish we could have won. I wish we could have sent the seniors out with a victory. I know one thing - they gave it everything they had and played extremely hard."

Michigan fifth-year senior quarterback John O'Korn on The Game being there for the taking:

"Absolutely. I think that's obvious. We go up 14-0. We don't build on that. We get back in the game. Then in the second half, we just give them the game."



Jim Harbaugh

let them get back in the game. Then in the second half, we just give them the game."



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TERRY GLENN: 1974-2017

Buckeye Legend Glenn 'Always Had A Smile'

By **CRAIG MERZ**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The smile.

That's what former Ohio State assistant coach Bill Conley will remember about Terry Glenn, who passed away at the age of 43 from injuries sustained in a car accident near his home in Dallas on Nov. 20.

"The thing about Terry Glenn is he always had a smile," Conley told BSB. "You think of that smile and, after that, Terry making big plays."

Glenn played wide receiver for the Buckeyes from 1993-95. After two mundane seasons in which he caught a combined 15 passes for 266 yards, he blossomed as a fourth-year junior to win the Biletnikoff Award as the nation's best receiver in 1995.

His 1,411 receiving yards that season set a school mark that is now second all-time. The 17 touchdown catches remain the OSU single-season record.

"He had speed, good hands, great leaping ability, the whole package," his head coach, John Cooper, told reporters the afternoon of Glenn's death. "I can't imagine a wide receiver with more talent than Terry Glenn had."

Glenn was an All-American in 1995 to join teammates Eddie George, the Heisman Trophy winner, and Orlando Pace, who won the Lombardi award as the top lineman.

"When I think of (Glenn), I just think of this calm, quiet spirit who had a great smile and just loved life and overcame so much adversity," George told The Columbus Dispatch.

At Ohio State, Glenn had 64 career catches for 1,677 yards and 17 TDs.

He entered the NFL draft after his junior year and was chosen seventh overall by the New England Patriots. He set an NFL record for rookie receptions with 90 in 1996, a mark that stood until Anquan Boldin made 101 catches in the 2003 season for the Arizona Cardinals.

In a game vs. the San Diego Chargers on Oct. 14, 2001, Glenn caught the first TD pass thrown in the NFL by Tom Brady.

Another Patriots QB, Drew Bledsoe, wrote in a memorial for Sports Illustrated that "Terry Glenn was the best receiver I ever threw to. Period."

After six seasons in New England, Glenn was traded the Green Bay Packers in 2002. He was there one season before going to the Dallas, where he retired following the 2006 season. He finished his NFL career with 593 catches for 8,823 yards and 44 touchdowns.

Glenn was raised in Columbus by his mother, who was murdered when he was 13. Conley credits the teachers and coaches at Brookhaven High School for guiding Glenn in the right direction.

"He was a guy who fought so much, who



FILE PHOTO

AN OSU GREAT – Wide receiver Terry Glenn was the first – and so far only – Ohio State player to win the Fred Biletnikoff Award.

became so successful," said Conley, now a BSB contributor. "Nobody went through a harder childhood than he did, and he ended up a winner and a champion through all that stuff.

"They really made him family at Brookhaven. They took him under their wing. He had great role models, and they did everything they could to make sure he understood about getting an education, using his talents for good. When you saw Terry you saw all those people because they were instrumental in his success."

Glenn was a walk-on for the Buckeyes, and it turned out to be one of their best investments.

"He came up the hard way," Cooper said. "And to see somebody progress like he did, and leave here as maybe, arguably the best wide receiver to play at Ohio State; (he) won the Biletnikoff Award, seventh player taken in the (1996 NFL) draft, all-pro and all that kind of stuff – your heart goes out to his family."

Needless to say, Glenn earned a scholarship before his playing days were over, and Conley said the receiver reminded him of other OSU greats.

"You watch him play high school football and you watch him on film, you knew he was really good," Conley said. "But there was one day, I'll never forget this. He was one of those guys like a Chris Gamble or Shawn Springs, or Joey Galloway. He could have played several positions. He could have been a great defensive back.

"On that day he was messing around punting the football. He was punting better than our starting punter, and he never practiced it. He was amazing. He was a great all-around athlete."

Glenn is most famous for turning a short pass by Bobby Hoying into an 82-yard sprint to the end zone against Notre Dame in 1995.

"He had speed. That's what made him dan-

banged up on it a little bit, but his acrobatic catches were commonplace," he said. "That's a great confidence thing for the quarterback to know if you're going to throw the ball somewhere in the county, he was going to catch it."

Glenn had off-the-field issues during his playing days, many related to alcohol and marijuana, but by all accounts he had cleaned up his life in recent years.

He started the 83 Kids Foundation (83 was his uniform number), an organization in Dallas that supports foster children. On the home page the afternoon of Nov. 24, four days after his death, "Terry Weekly Messages" was still there: "I'm A Foster Kid."

At the bottom of the page was Terry's Story with the headline, "We all make mistakes."

"What he's done with his foundation down there, that shows how much he understood the importance for kids to have role models," Conley said.

The Ohio State football team honored Glenn during the Nov. 25 Michigan game with a sticker on their helmets. It was black with a white TG and buckeye leaf with the words "Terry Glenn. 83. WR. 83 Kids Foundation."

Conley said he last saw Glenn about a year ago. "Like always, he had a smile that lights up the room."

As a tribute to Terry Glenn, Buckeye Sports Bulletin ran reprints in the Nov. 24 electronic BSB Quickly of stories from its coverage of Ohio State's 1995 win over Notre Dame that featured Glenn's famous catch. The stories are archived and free to all BSB print subscribers.

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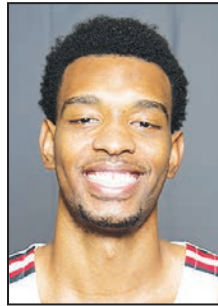




OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Holtmann Leaning On Veterans In 1st Season

Chris Holtmann probably doesn't have enough fingers and toes to count the number of times he's said the 2017-18 season will largely depend on Keita Bates-Diop, Jae'Sean Tate and Kam Williams. In June, Holtmann replaced Thad Matta as head coach of an Ohio State men's basketball team that saw seven players leave the program this past offseason for one reason or another. That includes 2017 signee Braxton Beverly, who was granted his release from OSU shortly after the coaching change and has since transferred to N.C. State.



Keita Bates-Diop



Jae'Sean Tate



Kam Williams

"I'm a very passionate guy whereas Keita, he's more of a think-about-it guy. He can see whereas I attack you straight on. We complement each other in that way because we have a balance between the two of us."

Bates-Diop, who played in only nine games last year because of the leg injury, credits Tate for helping him take on a leadership role this season.

"I just feel a lot more comfortable with it partially because of him," Bates-Diop said. "Just talking through it with him and watching last year and playing this year, he's bringing different sides out of me that I haven't before."

According to Tate, though, Bates-Diop has been a leader in some form since the two joined the program in 2014.

"We've always seen Keita like that," Tate said. "It's not like he's stepping up like a new guy on the block. We always have known what Keita is capable of and what he brings to the table. In my opinion, he's the best all-around player we have on this team, and I think the team would speak to that as well. It's just good to have him back out there with us."

Accompanying Bates-Diop and Tate in that 2014 class were David Bell and D'Angelo Russell. Bell transferred to Jacksonville University shortly after the 2016-17 campaign ended, and Russell left for the NBA after one season at Ohio State. Then from the time the 2015-16 season started to this past April, all five members of the 2015 class had exited the program. Because of these departures, this isn't the first time the team has leaned on Bates-Diop and Tate.

"For the most part, after our freshman year, that's kind of how it was," Bates-Diop said. "It was us two or (former Ohio State forward) Marc (Loving), and how we played was how the team was going to end up so we're kind of used to it. Someone new said it to us now, but we've heard it before."

As for Williams, the Baltimore native started the first two games of the year before assuming a reserve role to provide a veteran presence off the bench, Holtmann

about coaching him. He's a terrific young man, really talented and I think ready for an exciting season."

Bates-Diop opened the year by recording a double-double in five of the first seven games. The Normal, Ill., native had a team-high 19 points and a game-high 11 rebounds against Robert Morris on Nov. 10. Two days later vs. Radford, he was the game's leading scorer with 22 points and he corralled 10 boards. The 6-7, 235-pound forward then had 17 points and led all players with 12 rebounds vs. Texas Southern on Nov. 16. He followed that up with 18 points and a game-high 11 rebounds against Stanford on Nov. 24 and 16 points and 11 boards vs. Butler on Nov. 26. All of this came after he missed most of last year with a stress fracture in his left shin.

Tate, whom many regard as the heart

and soul of the team, started each of the first seven games of the season, averaging 14.5 points and 7.3 rebounds in those contests. The 6-4, 230-pound forward logged two double-doubles, collecting 13 points and 10 rebounds against Radford and 14 points and 10 boards vs. Stanford. Holtmann noted, however, that what Tate brings to the squad off the court can't be overlooked.

"He's fun, loving and has a smile on his face a lot," Holtmann said of the Pickerington, Ohio, native. "He's really a pleasure to be around and an energy life-giver. There's some people you're around and you leave their presence and you're like, 'Wow, I'm kind of drained,' because they were complaining all of the time and they were just an energy taker. He's an energy giver. I think that's who he is, and I think his teammates see that."

Bates-Diop and Tate do not have similar personalities by any stretch of the imagination. Bates-Diop is even-tempered while Tate wears his emotions on his sleeve. That dynamic, Tate explained, strikes a balance between the two.

"I think me and Keita bring out the best of each other," Tate said. "In practice, we're always matched up against each other; or when it's Scarlet vs. Gray it's always his team vs. mine. I just think that competitive nature of not wanting to get beat out by the other makes us better as a team and as individuals."

COURT REPORT Ryan McGlade

Holtmann and his staff brought in seven new players in the wake of the exodus. Given all the turnover, the first-year coach has not downplayed how vital Bates-Diop, a fourth-year junior, Tate, a senior, and Williams, a fifth-year senior, are to the team.

"I think we'll go as our fourth- and fifth-year guys go," Holtmann said. "Our season will in large part be determined by them, so you're talking about Jae'Sean, Kam and Keita. Not just in their play, but in their leadership, how they help direct the team. In a lot of ways, our season is in their hands, and I'm excited about that because Keita is a really high-level young man, really high-level. I think he's a really good player. I'm excited

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OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

OSU Men's Basketball Signees

Players in the class of 2018 who have signed a letter of intent to play basketball at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	Previous School
Justin Ahrens	SF	6-5	181	★★★	Versailles, Ohio
Jaedon LeDee	SF	6-7	230	★★★	Houston (Texas) The Kinkaid School
Luther Muhammad	SG	6-4	185	★★★★	Jersey City (N.J.) Hudson Catholic
Duane Washington	PG	6-3	190	★★★	Chatsworth (Calif.) Sierra Canyon

explained. Williams (6-2, 185) was averaging 6.5 points and 1.2 rebounds after seven contests.

Williams pointed out that he and Tate have a chance to leave a mark on the program in their final year of eligibility.

"This is a great opportunity for us to imprint a new legacy with the new coach and hopefully instill the type of leadership into the younger generation coming into Ohio State," Williams said.

While Bates-Diop, Tate and Williams are certainly being depended upon, Holtmann said he doesn't believe he has to worry about the younger players on the team relying on those three too much.

"I think our guys have confidence in what they can bring and I think they understand that those guys are not going to be able to be at the top of their game all 31 games," the head coach said. "I think our guys understand that. My point in (leaning on Bates-Diop, Tate and Williams) was they're going to need to play really well and then they're also going to need to lead really well. I think that's imperative that they do that. But the reality is that our guys understand everybody is going to need to play their role at a really high level."

Holtmann added that he's glad to have three players such as Bates-Diop, Tate and

Williams guiding the squad in his first year at the helm.

"Those are guys that have been part of our program for a number of years," Holtmann said of the trio. "Coach Matta and his staff did an outstanding job recruiting really impressive people. I'm excited about this group, and I'm excited about the fact that those three are leading this group."

Wesson Responds Well To Suspension

Ohio State freshman forward Kaleb Wesson quickly discovered the level of expectation Holtmann has of his players. The program announced less than an hour before the third game of the season against Texas Southern on Nov. 16 that Wesson, a Westerville (Ohio) South product, had been suspended.

"Ohio State freshman Kaleb Wesson has been suspended for the game vs. Texas Southern tonight for a failure to meet the expectations of the men's basketball program," the statement read. "This is specifically regarding time management and will be a one-game suspension."

Holtmann did not provide any further specifics as to why Wesson was suspended after the 82-64 win over the Tigers but commended him for his vocal presence on the

bench. Tate applauded the first-year player as well.

"He was the most active on the bench when he didn't play," Tate said. "There were times where he was coaching me up and making stuff in my head click like, 'He's right, we do have to keep talking.' For how young he is, he knows the game and his IQ of the game is very high."

In his first contest back from the suspension, Wesson scored 12 points, pulled down five rebounds and blocked a shot in 23 minutes off the bench during an 80-55 win over Northeastern on Nov. 19.

"The way he responded the next game, even the next day in practice, he was ready," Tate said. "It was like he didn't miss a beat. I think he's doing a great job. We just have to communicate more. He's going to be a terrific player in years to come."

Though Holtmann has been around only since June, he knew Wesson would bounce back.

"He responded like a player should, and really, that's a choice you have," the coach said. "But if you don't respond the right way you're just - he responded the right way, and that was the expectation that he would. He was ready to go and really well-prepared

for (Northeastern) and anxious to get out there. Kaleb is a really good kid. All young players - and older players for that matter - have opportunities to learn and grow, and I'm sure he looked at it as being that."

Wesson then made the first three starts of his career against Gonzaga (Nov. 24), Stanford (Nov. 24) and Butler (Nov. 26) in the Phil Knight Invitational in Portland, Ore., while sophomore center Micah Potter was nursing the injured ankle suffered late in the Northeastern game. Wesson (6-9, 270) scored 29 points and grabbed 12 rebounds in those three contests combined.

"Kaleb is really gifted with his back to the basket," Holtmann said. "What Kaleb has to understand is people are going to go at him on the interior, and they're going to attack him through ball-screen defense. He's going to have to prove that he can be effective in those areas."

"Right now, he's a really effective low-post finisher. He has to finish through traffic a little better. Some of that is his lift right now. In the offseason, we've probably got to get him a little more explosive. But he's very gifted at seeking contact and being able to finish over either shoulder."

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Bucks Were Impressive In Overcoming Slow Start

There's no denying that for 15 minutes and three seconds of game time, Michigan was putting together the better performance Nov. 25.

MOODY MUSINGS Tim Moody

At that point in time, Ohio State had managed to go backwards on offense – losing 6 yards in the first quarter – while the Buckeyes had allowed the Wolverines to take a 14-0 lead, thanks in part to horrendous tackling on a 42-yard punt return that set up the second touchdown. To some, the performance looked like the Buckeyes were sleepwalking, not unlike the loss to Iowa earlier this year.

Urban Meyer, though, took offense to that suggestion when asked how his team came out of a “slumber.” And he was right.

“Not a slumber – I made this comment many, many times,” Meyer said. “You’d have to be hard-pressed – I know there’s a lot of people that respect the rivalry – but that group of players in our locker room, coaching staff, the amount of respect that we have for this rivalry and that team that we played – slumber, absolutely not.”

“We’re playing a good football team. One of the best defenses in America in a home turf that – you go and ask those players how they feel about – they gave everything that they got. So I disagree with you very vehemently and I’m somewhat pissed. We’re playing our balls off against a very, very good team. We hung in there for four quarters. Name a rivalry when it’s not like that.”

It’s fair to say the Buckeyes were sleepwalking early on against Iowa. But to suggest that effort was an issue in The Game – that should never be the case. And it wasn’t the case in Ann Arbor this year.

Ohio State vs. Michigan is different, and it always has been. This time around, the Buckeyes had the better team as Michigan struggled throughout the regular season, but being the better team doesn’t always matter in the rivalry.

Luckily for Ohio State – although I’m sure Meyer wouldn’t use the word luck – the better team did end up winning. They didn’t wake up from a slumber, as that reporter suggested, but they did begin to execute in the areas that mattered most.

Throughout the season, Ohio State has attempted to become a passing team, but that’s simply not its identity. Against Michigan, when the Buckeyes finally got rolling, it was because the offensive line took over and the power-run game began to shine. Meyer recognized as much.

“The offensive line started blocking them,” he said. “The tailbacks ran really, really hard and then the opportunistic passing.”

Ohio State struck back first by way of a 21-yard touchdown run from J.T. Barrett. It was a called passing play, but protection from the offensive line and sustained blocking on the perimeter after Barrett took off are what got the Buckeyes on the board.

On Ohio State’s next possession, it was the run game that took over once again.

First, Mike Weber softened the defense with a 2-yard gain before Barrett picked up 26 to get the Buckeyes to the Michigan 25-yard line. A play later, Ohio State took advantage of that “opportunistic passing” Meyer talked about when Barrett hit Marcus Baugh for a 25-yard score and a tie game.

Those scoring drives, and the rest of the game – even after Dwayne Haskins replaced the injured Barrett – substantiated Meyer’s words.

When Ohio State has been at its worst this season – against Oklahoma and Iowa and in the first three quarters against Penn State – the Buckeyes have tried to be something they’re not on offense. In the final three frames against Michigan, they reverted to the best form of themselves, and that’s what got Ohio State back to Columbus with a sixth straight win over Michigan.

That said, the defense deserves its share of credit as well.

After their second touchdown, the Wolverines punted on four straight possessions. Then after U-M made it 20-14, the Buckeye defense embarked on a sequence that included a punt, a turnover on downs and an interception before the game ended with the Wolverines in possession.

On Haskins

I’ll admit, I’m not completely sold on Haskins as the future of the quarterback position at Ohio State.

Don’t get me wrong, I think he’s a phenomenal talent who could well go on to star for the Buckeyes. But no matter how you spin it, he doesn’t really fit the mold of a typical Urban Meyer quarterback. He’s nowhere near being a J.T. Barrett or a Braxton Miller or a Tim Tebow – but none of that mattered against Michigan.

Ohio State didn’t need Haskins to be a runner – although he went ahead and had a key, 22-yard scamper to set up the go-ahead score anyway. They needed him to make third-down throws when necessary and take care of the football. That’s exactly what he did, and it can’t be overstated how impressive that is for a guy playing the first meaningful snaps of his collegiate career.

Haskins showed off what he does best – sling the football – on a key third-and-13 just a couple of plays after entering the game. His inch-perfect throw to Austin Mack was nearly broken up, and it’s probably not a throw Barrett could have made. From there, he never had to make a similar completion, but he was efficient and accurate when asked to let it fly.

Would Ohio State have won that game if Barrett had been able to finish things out? I have no idea. And it doesn’t matter. Just like I have no idea whether or not Ohio State would have won the national title if Barrett had stayed healthy in 2014.

It’s easy to think about the parallels between that 2014 run and what has transpired this season, though. Barrett, of course, was injured against Michigan in each year, with a big-armed, seldom-used backup replacing him each time.

That year, Cardale Jones went on to lead the Buckeyes to a national title. This time around, Barrett is going to be back on the field for Ohio State against Wisconsin, and there will be plenty of fans who aren’t happy to see it.

As someone who was in Michigan Stadium to watch Haskins lead the Buckeyes to a comeback victory, I still think a healthy J.T. Barrett gives Ohio State the best chance to beat Wisconsin.

Haskins didn’t turn the ball over against Michigan – an impressive feat – but there’s no knowing how efficient he could be for a complete game. Maybe he would be able to do his best Cardale impression, and maybe he would throw four interceptions in a heartbreaking loss.

With Barrett, you know what you’re going to get. He’s not going to turn into Peyton Manning, but he’s not going to play like John O’Korn, either. (For what it’s worth, from an accuracy standpoint, I’ve never seen a quarterback play as poorly as O’Korn did against the Buckeyes.) With Barrett in charge, the Buckeyes have an experienced playmaker, and as long as they stick to their identity on offense, he’ll be the guy to lead Ohio State to a Big Ten title this year.

After this season, though, Barrett will be gone. Most assume that means Haskins will take over as the starter, and that’s probably what will end up happening, but don’t count out Joe Burrow and Tate Martell just yet.

Those three are going to battle it out this spring, and all three players are good enough to start at Ohio State. Haskins has the best arm, but Burrow and Martell are both better runners, and both have a higher ceiling as passers than J.T. Barrett.

No matter what happens going forward, though, Haskins has already cemented himself as a Buckeye legend.

On Recruiting Vs. Michigan

Ohio State and Michigan are two of the best football programs in America, which means they are often pursuing the same highly-rated recruits.

Right now, the Buckeyes have a clear edge in recruiting, but the Wolverines and head coach Jim Harbaugh have done quite well regardless. That recruiting success has included a few commitments from players Ohio State wanted, just as the Buckeyes have reeled in players that Michigan wanted. Leading up to The Game, Meyer admitted that there is “ridiculous pressure” to win recruiting battles against Ohio State’s rival.

In the past two recruiting cycles, though, two of Michigan’s top signees have been players Meyer wanted badly.

First, the Wolverines reeled in defensive lineman Rashan Gary, a New Jersey native who was the top-rated overall player in the 2016 class. Then Harbaugh was able to convince 2017 five-star wide receiver Donovan Peoples-Jones of

Detroit Cass Tech to stay home and play for the Wolverines.

Meyer certainly would have liked both Gary and Peoples-Jones to end up playing for the Buckeyes, but Ohio State never really had a chance in either recruitment, which shows how much ground Harbaugh has gained since replacing Brady Hoke.

It’s worth noting that both Gary and Peoples-Jones were outstanding in The Game this season. Gary finished the game with 10 total tackles, including three tackles for loss and two sacks. It was Peoples-Jones who returned that punt 42 yards to set up Michigan’s second touchdown.

But, regardless of those two performances, Meyer wouldn’t trade his recruiting classes for Michigan’s.

While Harbaugh has made up ground, Ohio State is still way ahead in recruiting, and if the trend continues Meyer could easily extend his six-game win streak against the Wolverines.

On The Playoffs

Heading into the Michigan game, Ohio State had a very clear path to the College Football Playoff. If the Buckeyes beat the Wolverines and Wisconsin, and Alabama won the SEC, Ohio State would be in.

Well, Alabama isn’t going to win the SEC. The Crimson Tide lost to Auburn in the Iron Bowl on Nov. 25, leaving the Buckeyes’ shot at a CFP berth pretty murky.

There’s still a chance, but the committee would either have to pick Ohio State over a one-loss Alabama or the Buckeyes would have to replace a league champion from the Big 12, ACC or SEC.

It’s safe to say that Ohio State won’t get in ahead of the SEC or ACC champ. That’s just not going to happen. But if TCU beats Oklahoma to win the Big 12, Ohio State would probably be able to stay ahead of the Horned Frogs and sneak into the playoffs at No. 4.

Or the committee could simply choose to put Ohio State in ahead of Alabama because, quite frankly, the Crimson Tide don’t have an impressive résumé at all. Their best wins are against LSU and Mississippi State, two ranked teams who, quite frankly, shouldn’t be ranked.

But in this day and age, Alabama is probably going to get the benefit of the doubt because, well, they’re Alabama. It would be a mistake. The Crimson Tide should not be in the playoffs this year.

None of those scenarios matter unless Ohio State wins the Big Ten. An undefeated Wisconsin would be in, leaving Alabama on the outside looking in and leaving the Buckeyes to play in the God-knows-what Bowl this season.

OPINION

Beating Michigan Will Always Be Meaningful

It never gets old.

I had a friend ask during the week if Ohio State's recent dominance over Michigan had taken any of the edge off the rivalry, the enjoyment out of victory. He made a point that when something becomes routine, it loses a bit of luster – and I don't disagree with that.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsmann

But Ohio State-Michigan is its own entity, and a fan – at least on this side of the fence – can never tire of beating a hated rival. There have been times in the not-so-distant past when the shoe was on the other foot and the Wolverines were reeling off victories. They got to the point where they attempted to paint Michigan State as their true rival, which all right-thinking football fans know was a flat-out lie.

There is never a situation where beating Michigan is old, where handing it to ole Jimmy Harbaugh becomes tiresome. Making it an even half dozen in a row is fine with me.

Rivalries are one of the best parts of college football, especially for underdogs. Given the way Michigan's season has gone, it would have loved nothing more than to wreck Ohio State's (slim) chances

of making the College Football Playoff. A win might have signaled that U-M isn't that far off – though it's not clear whether a win was necessary when one takes a look at the youth on the Wolverines roster. They have been banking their chips for 2018 and could be really good next season.

Which will make beating them again, in Ohio Stadium, even sweeter.

Ohio State has often had the better team in this fight yet came out on the wrong end of things. Most of the John Cooper era was that way, with numerous OSU teams close to the brass ring save for a loss to the Maize and Blue. So Michigan no doubt wanted to turn the tables again.

The game was a typical old-school affair, with a premium placed on running the football and keeping turnovers to a minimum. Both teams were held well below their season averages on the ground, but Michigan threw an interception, the only turnover of the contest, which OSU turned into an insurance touchdown.

Let it be known that I do not have the disdain or lack of belief in Jim Harbaugh as other esteemed members of this tome's staff do. I think Michigan's defense is very good, and Maurice Hurst and Rashan Gary will be fixtures in the NFL for years. Gary was especially disruptive, making 10 stops and three tackles for loss. No, defense isn't the problem in Ann Arbor.

Offense is, and that's odd when you consider Harbaugh was a quarterback.

That's the position that has really kept his team from being at the top echelon of the conference, whether because of injury or ineffectiveness. Brandon Peters was a decorated high school player and seemed to give a jolt to the Michigan offense in recent weeks. But he was out with a concussion, which left the chores to John O'Korn. When it was known that O'Korn was the starter, I said to anybody who would listen that the Buckeyes were not losing.

And they did not.

And it felt great.

Even if it was old hat, it wasn't old.

Beating your rival never becomes old.

Haskins The Hero

The symmetry with 2014 was uncanny – J.T. Barrett goes down, a strong-armed, mostly inexperienced backup comes to the rescue, and the Buckeyes win. That the original hero, Cardale Jones, was on the sideline made it even better.

When Barrett had his knee lock up after getting tackled on a third-quarter run, Buckeye Nation no doubt went into a bit of panic. OSU trailed 20-14 at the time, and Haskins was coming in cold. Sure, he had some game experience, but nothing truly substantial, nothing at crunch time that would show he was ready for the spotlight.

But those fears were alleviated quickly when he connected on a third-and-13 laser to Austin Mack, who went up between two Michigan defenders to snag the football. He took a shot for it, as did the defender, but it signaled that Haskins was not going to be overwhelmed. He also scampered 22 yards on a broken play, putting Ohio State on the doorstep before J.K. Dobbins took it in for the go-ahead points.

Haskins went 6 of 7 for 94 yards and averaged 8.0 yards a pop on three carries, though none was truly a read option.

And that's where the conundrum lies.

Yeah, Barrett wasn't great throwing the ball against the Wolverines – 3 of 8 for 30 yards with a touchdown. However, six of the eight passes were thrown well enough to be catches. The bigger part of the equation was Barrett's 67 rushing yards. That aspect is lost when Haskins is in the game, and it actually makes the Buckeyes easier to defend.

Without someone having to be assigned to the quarterback – which is the case when Barrett is in the game – another defender is now free to rush or play in the box to stop a more conventional running play. Haskins' arm certainly kept Michigan more than honest defensively, so it wasn't a huge issue. But going forward – which means next season – it will be interesting to see how much the coaching staff tweaks the playbook, because Haskins is not nearly the runner Barrett is, and Urban Meyer has always liked dual-threat quarterbacks. It could be similar to the last part of 2014, when the offense was pared down for Jones. He ran some, but they were direct quarterback dives or runs, not read option plays.

The fact that Barrett revealed he's been playing most of the season with a knee issue was eye-opening, and pretty admirable. That he's been able to play this well speaks volumes to the kind of competitor he is, and the folks who don't want to put him in the discussion as one of

Ohio State's top all-time quarterbacks just don't know football.

Any coach who has played against him or worked with him loves Barrett, and there is more to the quarterback position than simply throwing the ball. It's about leadership and making sure everyone is on the same page, and the Buckeyes had back-to-back false start penalties when Haskins came in, which means that it doesn't just automatically continue to run smoothly when Barrett is out of there.

The postgame revelation that Barrett nearly wasn't able to go after being run into by a cameraman was also a bit shocking, though Meyer was a tad on the dramatic side when he said there would be "an all-out investigation." Really? At whose expense? Unless someone can prove malicious intent, it appears to be an unfortunate accident, one that would be better off forgotten. It can't be undone, anyway, so just worry about the future and Wisconsin.

I will say, having been on the sideline at Michigan Stadium a number of times, it's easy to see how something like this could happen. There is very little room behind the benches, and if someone was trying to move to a different vantage point, it's not hard to imagine them running into a player on the way. It isn't ideal, but that's how the sideline is configured.

One Last Push

Ohio State has one final chance to impress the CFP committee, and given the chaos that went down over the final weekend of the regular season it isn't out of the question that the Buckeyes make the field of four.

Whether or not they are deserving is another matter – I am still firmly of the belief that a late-season loss as bad as the one to Iowa means no reward. But if all of the dominoes fall correctly, there may not be much left to choose from. The committee has shown that it (mostly) values a championship, with 11 of the 12 entrants having one. It could come in handy if the decision comes down to Ohio State and a one-loss Alabama without a league crown. And, unlike last year's Buckeyes, which had a clear résumé advantage over Penn State, Alabama has a relatively weak schedule, with its best win coming against No. 19 LSU.

Should be interesting, for sure.

With championship weekend looming, here is the latest Dandy Dozen:

1. Clemson (11-1)
2. Oklahoma (11-1)
3. Auburn (10-2)
4. Georgia (11-1)
5. Wisconsin (12-0)
6. Alabama (11-1)
7. Miami (Fla.) (10-1)
8. Ohio State (10-2)
9. TCU (10-2)
10. USC (10-2)
11. Penn State (10-2)
12. UCF (11-0)

If all of the favorites and Wisconsin win, that's your four team playoff – ACC, Big 12, SEC and Big Ten champions. If the Buckeyes win, and if there is chaos elsewhere, who knows what's going to happen. Ohio State is in the mix, whether or not it should be, and the committee will have some tough decisions to make and explain no matter how it all shakes out.

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Victory Again Shows OSU RBs Need More Touches

I never get tired of Ohio State beating Michigan. The latest victory wasn't necessarily pretty, but few Ohio State-Michigan games are. And I had some anxious moments, but one generally does in The Game.

This particular edition of the greatest rivalry in sports added to the ongoing story line of the Buckeyes' 2017 season. How good is quarterback J.T. Barrett, and should he continue as OSU's starting quarterback? While this is not the answer to either of those questions, let's point out that Barrett finishes his Ohio State career with a 4-0 record as a starter against the Wolverines. Give the man his props on that, though there are many of the detractors who will remind you that the Buckeyes were trailing 20-14 when the fifth-year senior QB was knocked out of the game midway through the third quarter.

I have been a backer of Barrett for most of the season, not based on where he stands in the annals of Ohio State quarterbacks through the years but based on my belief that he was best suited to lead the team this season. Would Dwayne Haskins or Joe Burrow have been able to rally the Buckeyes back to their dramatic win over Penn State, for instance? We'll never know.

But Haskins added fuel to the ongoing controversy with a clutch performance against his team's archrival to help secure the victory over Michigan. The Buckeye offense looked a bit like it was being led by an inexperienced freshman as he backed the team into a third-and-13 on consecutive false start calls shortly after taking over. However he then drilled a pivotal 27-yard pass to Austin Mack for the first down at the Michigan 26. Two plays later he ran 22 yards to the U-M 1-yard line to set up the go-ahead touchdown by J.K. Dobbins at the 1:34 mark of the third period.

He marched the team 47 yards on 10 plays on Ohio State's next possession, setting up a 44-yard Sean Nuernberger field goal to stretch the lead to 24-20, and then moved the team to missed field-goal distance on seven plays the next time with the ball, eating up 4:06 of critical time.

Once John O'Korn threw an ugly interception with just 2:36 remaining, there was blood in the water and Haskins let Dobbins and Mike Weber do the honors with three runs to cover the 66 yards and put the game on ice at 31-20 with just 1:44 remaining.

Haskins finished 6 of 7 passing for 94 yards and ran three times for 24 yards. Hidden in that solid stat line are the key run and pass on the go-ahead drive in which he came in cold. Not hidden is the fact that the freshman did not yield a turnover. That is really the key to look at when evaluating the play of a rookie in The Game.

His play will leave the Barrett doubters wondering what might have happened if Urban Meyer had benched his four-year starter somewhere during the season. It's doubtful Haskins would have been ready for the Oklahoma game, but Barrett's critics will wonder how Haskins might have done against Iowa. Certainly, fans looking ahead to next year will feel more comfortable with Haskins if he wins the starting job in 2018.

Although the Buckeyes were trailing when Barrett left the game, he left the game in a manageable position for Haskins with the team just six points down. It could have been a lot worse.

All week I had been telling anyone who would listen that if the Buckeyes got into a situation where they were running Barrett rather than running backs Dobbins and Weber, it could be a long afternoon. I got an uneasy

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

feeling right off the bat when Barrett carried on Ohio State's first play from scrimmage – a loss of 2. Dobbins carried just once in the first quarter – no totes for Weber – as the Buckeyes seemed stuck in reverse, tallying negative yardage in the period. Michigan, meanwhile, was taking advantage of what I thought was really sloppy tackling by the Buckeyes to jump out to a 14-0 lead.

To the surprise of no one who has followed the Buckeyes during the Barrett era, Meyer, or the quarterback himself, started calling Barrett's number. This made me *really* nervous. However, it worked. Barrett carried seven times for 74 yards in the second quarter, rallying the Buckeyes to a 14-14 tie at the half. At one point, when *he* made a freshman mistake and let the play clock run out, he ran the ball in from distance twice, appearing, first, to score on the nullified 16-yard run and then taking it in from 21 after the penalty to make the score 14-7 at the 9:50 mark of the second.

On the next drive, he used a 26-yard run to move the team to the Michigan 25 to set up a scoring pass to tight end Marcus Baugh and tie the game.

News flash to Wisconsin's defensive coaches. If the Buckeyes get in trouble they are going to run Barrett, assuming he is able to play or he is not seated in favor of Haskins.

Kudos to Barrett, as I have noted in this space previously, in that he does a much better job of tucking and running when green space opens in front of him. There was a time there when he would eschew the easy yardage, waiting and waiting for a receiver to come open, which frequently the receivers never did. I think this was back when the Buckeyes – and their quarterback – were trying to prove to the world that they *could* pass. If it's there, take the easy yardage.

It wasn't until Ohio State's next possession after the game was tied, which started with 4:30 to go until the break, that Dobbins or Weber or some combination thereof ran the ball on consecutive plays. Dobbins had consecutive runs of 13, 4 and 1 yard to set up a third-and-5 at the Michigan 49. Unfortunately, center Billy Price snapped a rocket past Barrett that resulted in a 17-yard loss and a punt and the teams entered the locker rooms even at 14, with Dobbins and Weber combining for only seven carries and 46 yards in the half.

The Buckeyes didn't consistently go to Dobbins and Weber until Barrett went down, and it seemed like the initial plays the Buckeyes called for the two were slow-developing runs. I am far from an offensive guru but I don't understand the reluctance to pound the pair, allowing the offensive line to get in a groove. You've got them, use them.

Dobbins ended up with 15 carries for 101 yards, good for a touchdown and a 6.7-yard average. Weber added 57 yards and a score on 12 carries (4.8-yard average). While I hear everyone, including others in this paper, touting the Ohio State ground attack in the win, the figures of the gifted tailbacks were padded by the drive after O'Korn's ugly interception in the fourth quarter took the wind out of the Michigan defense's sails. In fact, 66 of the duo's combined 158 yards (41.8 percent) came on that one drive.

Give these guys a consistent chance from the outset, let them get in tune with the big guys up front, and it will not only improve the ground game but open up the passing attack as well.

And while I am nit-picking on offense after a game which I thoroughly enjoyed, am I the only one who thinks Ohio State, a shotgun team, should have a formation with the quarterback under center in its repertoire? With the Buckeyes holding a narrow 24-20 lead and facing a third-and-1 at the Michigan 25, would Haskins under center have had a better shot at sneaking for the yard or giving it to Dobbins or Weber to power toward the line to gain? Instead, Weber was thrown for a 2-yard loss, Nuernberger missed a 43-yard field goal and the Wolverines had new life, however briefly, as O'Korn quickly threw his game-changing interception.

Speaking of nit-picking, I have thrown darts from time to time at the vaunted Buckeye defensive line for not living up to its press clippings. But as the guys in the trenches did at crunch time in the thrilling win over Penn State, they stepped up as the Michigan game progressed and the pressure on O'Korn was relentless in the second half, when the Buckeyes recorded four of their five sacks.

Plays We Remember

There are always plays that stand out in Ohio State-Michigan games, and oftentimes those are the plays for which we best remember certain Buckeyes. Think Jim Laughlin's blocked punt in 1979 or Vaughn Broadnax's block to spring Art Schlichter for the winning score in '81.

Haskins' pass to Mack will certainly end up in Buckeye lore. The pass was thrown into such tight quarters that all three players involved were shaken up after colliding on the play. But the toss was on the money, and Mack held on.

I started thinking about other great plays during my 39 years on the beat. There was Mike Lanese's twisting catch from Mike Tomczak for a crucial fourth-quarter first down in the win over Michigan in 1984. How about Carlos Snow turning a short pass into a 70-yard TD to open the second half in the dramatic win in Ann Arbor 30 years ago during Earle Bruce's last game as Buckeye coach?

In a quirky one, I thought of fullback Brandon Schnitker's leaping grab of a Craig Krenzler pass for a 13-yard gain on a pass that wasn't even intended for him that jump-started OSU's game-winning drive against Michigan in 2002 in a victory that catapulted the Buckeyes to the national championship game. And few will forget Anthony Gonzalez's leaping catch of a Troy Smith rocket at the Michigan 4 to set up the winning TD in 2005.

I am sure many of you remember other big pass plays from the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry.

With Haskins taking over for the injured Barrett in Ann Arbor, I thought of one other pass play from that epic win in Ann Arbor in 1987. Tom Tupa was knocked out of the game on a hard hit in the fourth quarter with the score knotted at 20. Freshman Greg Frey came in cold off the bench staring at a third-and-9. He completed a 19-yard strike to Vince

Workman to the U-M 18 to set up the winning Matt Frantz field goal. Tupa was back in on the next play, but Frey will always be remembered for that one play in The Game.

No BSB Print Issue

There will be no print edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin following the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 2. The game with Wisconsin will be covered in the electronic BSB Quickly set to be posted Dec. 5. This will be a complete electronic issue with game coverage, recruiting coverage, news of the basketball teams, columns and all the other features you enjoy in print editions of BSB.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin publishes 24 print editions per year. The print schedule is established well in advance, and an issue is generally not scheduled for the week following the Big Ten Championship Game because there is no guarantee the Buckeyes will participate and it would be a poor use of our print allotment.

BSB Quickly is free to all print subscribers to Buckeye Sports Bulletin. If you have not already signed up for this electronic service, see the simple instructions on page 5 of this issue or give us a call at (614) 486-2202 with any questions.

Who Was That Team?

If you were a casual fan scanning channels and came across this year's Ohio State-Michigan game, you would have had no idea that the Wolverines were playing their archrival. There was no way to know that was Ohio State in those alternate uniforms that had no connection to the Buckeyes and their colors other than some hard-to-see Buckeye leaves on the helmets.

I really found these uniforms offensive. This is arguably the most storied rivalry in sports. You don't take away from the traditions of that rivalry with uniforms that could just as likely be for Podunk U. as for the tradition-rich Ohio State Buckeyes. Past players and coaches for both teams should be insulted by the disrespect for the rivalry.

The uniforms for both Ohio State and Michigan have been virtually the same for as long as most of us can remember. You wouldn't want the Wolverines to play in the game without their iconic helmets. The New York Yankees wouldn't host the Boston Red Sox without their pinstripes. I don't care how much money was involved, that was completely unacceptable.

Gimmicks are for wannabes. Ohio State and Michigan are hardly wannabes.

In Time For The Holidays

Any diehard Buckeye fan has a complete library of books by Jack Park, the noted Ohio State football historian. Jack has a new book, "Buckeye Reflections," out just in time for the holiday season. The book, co-written with Maureen Zappala, features numerous outstanding, unusual and humorous happenings from Ohio State's great football tradition. Many of the 300-plus entries are little known to even the most ardent Buckeye fans.

Among those interviewed for the book, in addition to many former players, are coaches Jim Tressell and Urban Meyer, former band director Paul Droste, Shelly Graf, the first female drum major, and a variety of other interesting people connected with Ohio State football.

To order this beautiful, 256-page hard-covered book, go to BuckeyeReflectionsBook.com.