

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$3.00

PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!



Vol. 42, No. 10

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Nov. 19, 2022



SONNY BROCKWAY

GROUND ASSAULT — Aided by (L-R) Miyan Williams, C.J. Stroud and Xavier Johnson, Ohio State finished with a season-high 340 rushing yards in a 56-14 win over Indiana on Nov. 12. It was the most rushing yards for the Buckeyes since notching 399 yards against Northwestern in the 2020 Big Ten Championship Game.

Your Mailing Label Goes Here
Call (614) 486-2202
Today To Subscribe

Running Away With It

Resurgent Ground Game Leads Bucks Past Hoosiers

By **BRADEN MOLES**
BSB Associate Editor

Here we go again.

That thought likely went through the head of most watching Ohio State's hosting of Indiana on Nov. 12. After a week of hearing about nothing other than the tumultuous weather at Northwestern — which, admittedly, was among the worst Ohio State had played through in recent memory — the forecast showed further dreary conditions for the Buckeyes' noon kickoff against the Hoosiers.

While some snow fell in the morning in the sub-40 temperatures, the majority of flurries began right near the start of the game, coinciding with Ohio State's opening drive after Indiana won the coin toss and deferred to the second half.

The other concern coming out of Ohio State's 21-7 win over Northwestern was, of course, the rushing attack, or the lack thereof. The Buckeyes

were never able to develop a rhythm on the ground and struggled specifically in short-yardage situations against the Wildcats, failing to convert just a yard on several occasions on third and fourth down.

Ohio State's first play from scrimmage against IU was a screen pass to Marvin Harrison Jr. that went for no gain, dredging up bad memories of similar plays for no gain or a loss just two weeks prior against Penn State. After an 8-yard pass to Julian Fleming on second down, the Buckeyes were faced with yet another short-yardage situation with a third-and-2.

Quarterback C.J. Stroud, after a brief display last week, again showed off his wheels on the play by rolling out left after surveying the field, but he gained just a yard, coming up short of the line to gain and leading to an Ohio State punt.

The worst of Ohio State's tendencies since the off week were out in full force during the first drive against the Hoosiers, and with time running out on

the regular season, the question stood of how long would it take for the Buckeyes to figure out their problems?

As it turns out, all that ailed Ohio State was solved on the next drive. Running back Miyan Williams — the lone starter for the Buckeyes with TreVeyon Henderson missing his second consecutive game — gained 10 yards on the first play and rushed for 32 yards on the next. Harrison then got involved in the run game, gaining 18 yards on the ground after some trickery in the backfield, and Stroud found Emeka Egbuka in the end zone just three plays later for a 6-yard score.

And while just one drive of some successful rushing does not establish Ohio State's ground game as fully back, it was an omen of things to come. Even with the loss of Williams, who was helped to the sideline and later carted to the locker

Continued On Page 8

From The Message Board

Ohio State's running game got back on track against Indiana, punishing the Hoosiers en route to 340 yards on the ground. However, the Buckeyes saw Miyan Williams get carted from the sideline during the second quarter, as well as TreVeyon Henderson and Chip Trayanum sidelined due to injuries. Right tackle Dawand Jones was also held out of the game due to an injury. We asked BSB readers what their comfort level is in freshman back Dallan Hayden, as well as other potential replacements, if the Buckeyes are unable to trot out Williams or Henderson during the next two weeks. Here are some of the responses:

"Succinctly, without Henderson and Williams, I think Ohio State can win vs Maryland but can't win vs Michigan."

– Terrier Buck

"It would be awfully difficult to beat TTUN without Williams and Henderson. Not saying it's not possible but it would take a great effort from C.J. Stroud and the defense to get it done."

– bstu9

"One of them will be back by the Michigan game."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"I have faith in Ryan Day and Kevin Wilson that they will come up with play calling that uses RBs Dallan Hayden and Xavier Johnson effectively against TTUN. It may be actually a disadvantage for TTUN's defensive game planning that they haven't seen these two extensively. I was very encouraged by Xavier Johnson making so many defenders miss him on his way to the long TD against IU and his teammates blocking ferociously for him on the way (I couldn't believe Marvin Harrison Jr.'s pancake block on that run!). The Buckeyes

will plan to get on top by a few TDs that will make TTUN's run game-based offense ineffective in catching up."

– AnthonyBuckeye

"I am concerned about these repeated injuries to our starting RBs. I've never seen anything like this where the top 3 RBs (Henderson, Williams and Pryor) to start the year all go down at some point. But look, it starts with the big guys up front with execution and winning in the trenches. Dallan Hayden has a good skill set and was a four-star recruit. Xavier Johnson has shown that he is a darn good 'jack of all trades.' Execution, Execution & Execution and we roll into the B1G Championship!"

– Buckeye Scott

"We took care of business to go 10-0. That was the plan. Time to get healthy all around. I really like Hayden. He has a quick step and hits the hole. He can spot Williams and Henderson next few weeks. We are O.K. there. Looking for C.J. to relax and not force as much. He seems to play as if he has to thread every needle. Play and have fun. On to No. 11 ... just one at a time."

– John Lanning

"Hard to ignore the short-yardage situation and more importantly the injuries. But open a hole and Hayden or Johnson can get through it, as evidenced by Johnson's long run against Indiana."

– Mcarr

"Day and Frye must challenge the offensive linemen to execute their blocking assignments with 100 percent efficiency against Michigan on every play to give the running backs every advantage in gaining yardage and moving the sticks. In the recent past, opponents have stacked the box with eight defenders to stop the run and force the Buckeye offense to pass the ball ... choosing their poison. If the Bucks go forward with four or five wounded running backs, the opponents might drop seven or eight players into coverage (to stop the passing attack) and dare the Buckeyes to beat them by running the ball. We can't assume we can beat the top-tier teams without our best athletes running the ball if they have unstable wheels."

– BYRON MCNUTT

FAN FORUM

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State's 56-14 win over Indiana had several dominant individual performances from Buckeyes on both sides of the ball. BSB asked its writers and subscribers to award Buckeye Leaves based on who they believe had the most impact on the win.

Andy Anders, BSB: In a contest with plenty of impactful defensive players for the Buckeyes, my Buckeye Leaf goes to who I thought was the most impactful against Indiana: Lathan Ransom.

Ransom filled his usual duties as a sweeper on the back end, saving a touchdown in the first half by running down a long play and collecting nine tackles total on the day, second on the team.

Defensive coordinator Jim Knowles had hinted that safety blitzes are a wrinkle in his defense that Ohio State hadn't shown yet this season, and he unveiled those with Ransom against the Hoosiers. They worked to perfection and Ransom came away with 1.5 sacks.

No play Ransom made was bigger than his third-quarter blocked punt, however. A clean stuff off the boot of Indiana's James Evans set up OSU at the Hoosiers' 2-yard line, and the Buckeyes extended their lead to 35-7 two plays later.

Jack Emerson, BSB: It seems like he gets Buckeye Leaf recognition every week, but again, I must bestow a leaf upon wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr.

Harrison dazzled with his ability to make catches in traffic while showing off his NFL-caliber body control en route to seven receptions for 135 yards. The Philadelphia native also hauled in a 58-yard touchdown, showcasing his prowess in the open field as well.

In total, C.J. Stroud looked to his favorite target 12 times against the Hoosiers, and Harrison, once again, did not disappoint.

Braden Moles, BSB: Give a hand to running back Miyan Williams, who led a surging rushing attack for Ohio State that finished with 340 rushing yards on 43 carries, good for 7.9 yards per attempt. Williams led the pack with 147 yards on 15 carries, good for 9.8 yards per attempt, including a 48-yard rushing touchdown. He left the game with an injury in the second quarter and did not return, but the Buckeyes will hope to have him back soon considering how solid he looked.

Not only did Williams impress, but he did so without TreVeyon Henderson in the lineup, helping establish Ohio State's rushing attack after several letdowns in recent weeks. The question now is if he can return soon and, when he does, if he can keep his performance up.

BSB Subscribers

bstu9: Kamryn Babb gets my Buckeye leaf. The amount of adversity that young man has faced is unreal. To see him score a TD was awesome.

BuckeyeScott: Xavier Johnson and Steele Chambers get my Buckeyes Leaves. Xavier steps up and makes more big plays

including his 71-yard TD jaunt, a 30-yard kick return, and a 34-yard catch. Steele had a very workman-like day while leading the team with 10 tackles, a shared sack and had a TFL.

AnthonyBuckeye: Lathan Ransom for an unbelievable outing with sacks, blocked punt, a multitude of tackles, pass-breakup and boundless energy. RBs Miyan Williams, Dallan Hayden and Xavier Johnson (why hasn't he played more?) for 300+ yards rushing. Josh Fryar for an excellent outing with Dawand Jones injured, especially with run-blocking. Jack Sawyer for speedy play with sacks. Marvelous Marvin Harrison Jr. for his catches (how did he get his right foot down in time on that catch?) and his unbelievable block on Xavier Johnson's TD run. Cade Stover for skill and power in his TD catches. Steele Chambers and Tommy Eichenberg (he seems to know where the ball is going even before the IU coach). Tyleik Williams and Zach Harrison for another dominating outing and the defensive coaching staff for such a multitude of three-and-outs.

Tiffin Buckeye: Kam Babb, 100 percent. What a story of perseverance and believing in yourself.

Poster That Harley Built: Kamryn Babb gets a "Lifetime Achievement" Leaf. My game leaves go to Lathan Ransom for trying to push J.T. Tuimoloau for defensive performance of the year and Xavier Johnson for doing a little bit of everything to defeat the Hoosiers. He may end up being the starting tailback against TTUN if the attrition continues.

R1TBDBITL: "Most Inspirational" leaf to Kam Babb and "Most Versatile" leaf to Xavier Johnson.

PeyoteBuck: How about a shout-out for Dallan Hayden? When called to duty, he performed. Keep an eye on this guy.

BYRON MCNUTT: Despite the injury bug, the unfavorable weather conditions and going deep into the depth chart, the ball carriers have not turned the ball over. Against the best teams, ball security and execution by both the offense and defense will be paramount. When one player goes out the rest of the team needs to step up just a little more. Each week we're seeing more and more players performing their best. Buckeye Nation needs to do the same as the season reaches a peak.

BOB CODY: A LOT of heroes in this game! Miyan Williams gets several leaves and hopes for a speedy recovery. Marvin Harrison Jr. gets a leaf for that sideline catch and overall awesomeness. Tommy Eichenberg gets leaves for being a combo of Gradishar, Spielman and Katzenmoyer. Jack Sawyer sacks get a leaf. Lathan Ransom is totally leaf-worthy. C.J. = Mr. Buckeye Leaf. Cade Stover more leaves than on the family farm. Xavier Johnson – that TD was very leaf-worthy. Dallan Hayden – his future leaves are now. Most of all Kamryn Babb gets a Buckeye tree full of leaves for his perseverance and grit and bringing all Buckeye fans to tears of joy!

Attention Reds Fans

Here's a chance for Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers who are also Cincinnati Reds fans to enjoy a year of Reds Report, BSB's sister publication covering the Reds, for just \$9.95, a \$36 savings over the regular \$45.95 rate. Take advantage of this special offer for BSB readers and we will also send you a voucher good for two free tickets to your choice of select Reds games this season.

This will be another interesting year for Reds Report readers as our extensive Reds minor-league system coverage becomes more critical with the team in the midst of its rebuilding project. You will also enjoy stories, columns, statistics and box scores for the major-league club.

Just send your \$9.95 to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212 or call (614) 486-2202 for credit card orders. You must mention the Reds BSB Special.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin (USPS 705-690, ISSN 0883-6833.) is published 24 times a year (weekly September through November, biweekly mid-March through May and January through early March and monthly June through August and December) by:

Columbus Sports Publications
1350 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 30
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
(614) 486-2202
bsb@buckeyesports.com

Periodical class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Subscription rates: \$99.95/year.

PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
Mark Rea

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Braden Moles

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
Andy Anders Ryan Rios
David Breithaupt Bob Roehm
Bill Conley Mark Schmetzer
Jack Emerson Steve Siegfried
Rich Exner Jeff Svoboda
Craig Merz Mike Wachsman

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Paula Serra Ron Friedman

2022-23 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 42)

No. 1	Sept. 10	No. 13	Dec. 17
No. 2	Sept. 17	No. 14	Jan. 14
No. 3	Sept. 24	No. 15	Jan. 28
No. 4	Oct. 1	No. 16	Feb. 11
No. 5	Oct. 8	No. 17	March 4
No. 6	Oct. 22	No. 18	March 18
No. 7	Oct. 29	No. 19	April 1
No. 8	Nov. 5	No. 20	April 15
No. 9	Nov. 12	No. 21	May
No. 10	Nov. 19	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 26	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 3	No. 24	August

The next issue (Nov. 26 cover date) will be mailed on Nov. 22.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin is a privately owned newspaper and is not affiliated directly or indirectly with The Ohio State University.



Time To Have Finesse Vs. Power Discussion

After a game during which Ohio State rolled up 662 yards of total offense, including a season-best 340 of those on the ground despite the absences of running back TreVeyon Henderson and starting right tackle Dawand Jones, it might seem foolhardy to have a discussion about whether the Buckeyes can mix power with their offensive finesse, but it seems like one worth having anyway.

Forty-eight games into his head coaching career, Ryan Day long ago stopped needing to prove his passing game bona fides as the Buckeyes continue to shred the program record book in terms of passing and receiving. And now that Jim Knowles has arrived to resurrect the OSU defense from the dead, it appears Ohio State is truly a legitimate contender in the national championship race.

But can the Buckeyes beat the teams they need to beat – Michigan and Georgia, for example – without the ability to control the tempo of the game with their running attack?

A week after the offense struggled mightily in a cold, howling wind at Northwestern, Day talked about a desire to re-establish his running game for the 2022 stretch run. And by all accounts, that desire was realized when Ohio State rushed for its highest total since going for 399 during a 22-10 win against Northwestern in the 2020 Big Ten Championship Game.

If you remember, that was the contest during which Trey Sermon shattered the single-game program record with 331 rushing yards. Sermon followed with a 193-yard performance during a playoff semifinal win against Clemson, but then Sermon was injured early in the national championship game, Alabama effectively slowed down the OSU running attack, and the Crimson Tide ran away with a 52-24 victory.

Rushing for 340 yards against any Big Ten opponent provides a reason to celebrate, especially for a team that seemed so out of sorts on offense just a week before. But any enthusiasm must be tempered on one hand by the fact Indiana entered the game ranked 11th in the conference and 83rd in the nation in run defense, and on the other by the continued injury problems faced by Henderson and Miyan Williams.

Henderson missed his second game in a row with what has been described as a lower-body injury, and his carries have been limited to just 96 all season. Williams was on his way to a career day against the Hoosiers, carrying 15 times in the first half for 147 yards and a touchdown before leaving the game with what appeared to be a lower-leg injury. He rode off the field on a medical cart before returning to the sideline with the aid of crutches.

That left the running game mostly in the hands of freshman Dallan Hayden and former walk-on and current Swiss army knife Xavier Johnson. Much like he did earlier this season during the blowout against Toledo, Hayden availed himself of his opportunity and picked up 102 yards and a touchdown on 19 carries. Meanwhile, Johnson bobbed and weaved his way to a 71-yard touchdown run early in the fourth quarter on what was his only carry of the game. Johnson also had two receptions for 47 yards, returned two kickoffs for 51 yards, and recovered a blocked punt.

Meanwhile, quarterback C.J. Stroud seemed once again reluctant to join the running attack. One week after rushing for a career-high 79 yards on six carries, the QB carried only four times for 8 yards against the Hoosiers. That included a third-and-2 scramble during Ohio State's first possession of the game when Stroud looked to have easy sailing to a first down but appeared to slow down be-

fore contact and wound up being pushed out of bounds short of the line to gain.

It was another example of how a team can total 662 yards while scoring 56 points and still seem very much a work in progress in terms of short-yardage situations.

Day seems to want to be able to rely upon his offensive power game on third-and-2 or fourth-and-1 situations, but the Buckeyes cannot seem to consistently convert those plays into first downs. After OSU defensive back Lathan Ransom blocked an Indiana punt and Johnson recovered at the IU 2-yard line, it seemed the perfect scenario to use the run-

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

ning game to punch the ball into the end zone.

From the classic I-formation with fullback Mitch Rossi lined up directly behind Stroud and in front of Hayden, Day called for an interior run. But as freshmen sometimes do, Hayden made a poor read, cut the wrong way and was stopped at the 1-yard line. On the next play, the Buckeyes again lined up in the power-I, but Day couldn't force himself to call another power dive. The OSU head coach instead instructed Stroud to fake the handoff to Hayden before moving to his left and finding tight end Cade Stover standing wide open in the end zone.

The play was a thing of beauty and produced an easy pitch-and-catch touchdown. But it seemed to underscore the fact that Ohio State remains primarily a finesse team, and its head coach is more comfortable with it that way.

But will that philosophy get it done down the stretch? We're all about to find out.

Defining Defensive Series

The marked improvement the Buckeyes have made during their first year with Knowles as defensive coordinator was highlighted during an Indiana possession early in the second quarter. It was one of nine three-and-outs the OSU defense forced upon the Hoosiers during the afternoon, and it featured outstanding efforts that were few and far between the last couple of years.

IU had begun to show a little life after falling into an early 21-0 hole. The Hoosiers got a touchdown near the end of the first quarter and then stopped the Ohio State offense on its ensuing possession and forced the Buckeyes to punt.

Eager to get his offense back in gear, Indiana quarterback Dexter Williams II executed a first-down handoff to tailback Shaun Shivers, but a wall of OSU defenders swarmed Shivers as he tried to shift to his left, and the play resulted in only a 2-yard gain for the Hoosiers.

On the next play, Williams rolled right and then threw back to his left, dumping off a screen pass to tight end AJ Barner. It was a play that has worked repeatedly against the Ohio State defense in the past, but this time safety Ronnie Hickman fought through a block from IU left tackle Luke Haggard and blew up the play for a 2-yard loss. What made the play even more remarkable is that the 6-1, 207-pound Hickman was giving away a considerable amount of size to both Haggard (6-7, 305) and Barner (6-6, 250).

Then, with the Hoosiers facing third-and-10, OSU linebacker Steele Chambers

dropped into medium coverage but kept one eye on Williams, who took off on a scramble. Chambers quickly closed about a 15-yard gap, latched onto the Indiana QB by the shoulder pads, and threw Williams out of bounds 6 yards short of the first-down marker.

The Hoosiers were forced to punt, and just three plays later, Miyan Williams bolted through a gaping hole for a 48-yard touchdown gallop. That gave the Buckeyes a 28-7 lead at the 10:41 mark of the second quarter, effectively ending any hopes Indiana might have harbored regarding an upset.

One additional note about Ohio State's long scoring run by Williams. It came on a third-and-1 play, and you could have run the proverbial Mack truck through the hole created when right guard Matthew Jones and right tackle Josh Fryar collapsed the left side of the Indiana defensive line, and center Luke Wyppler neutralized IU defensive tackle Patrick Lucas Jr. at the point of attack. Linebacker Aaron Casey represented Indiana's last chance to get Williams at the line of scrimmage, but OSU left guard Donovan Jackson came up with enough of a chip block on Casey, and Williams was gone.

It was the perfect call in that the Buckeyes caught the Hoosiers with their safeties up near the line of scrimmage as well as cornerback Brylan Lanier with his back turned while the redshirt freshman defender was giving his undivided attention to receiver Marvin Harrison Jr.

So apparently, if everything goes perfectly according to plan, Ohio State can indeed control the line of scrimmage in short-yardage situations – at least on occasion.

What's In A Name?

Currently airing during college football telecasts are vignettes featuring former players and coaches marking the 75th anniversary of the National Football Foundation. In addition to promoting and developing the sport on all levels, as well as awarding scholarships and national championships, the NFF oversees administration and operation of the College Football Hall of Fame.

In one particular spot, current Houston Texans head coach Lovie Smith reminisces about his college career at the University of Tulsa and how he was recruited by then Golden Hurricane head coach John Cooper. Yes, that's the same John Cooper who went on to become head coach at Ohio State from 1988 to 2000, and it's the same Lovie Smith who spent four years as Cooper's linebackers coach at Tulsa and one more at OSU in 1995 in charge of defensive backs.

While everyone I know affectionally refers to the College Football Hall of Fame coach simply as "Coop," Smith twice called him as "Johnco" during the NFF spot. I've been covering Cooper since 1988, and over the course of those 34 years, I've never once ever heard him called "Johnco" until now.

And while we're on the subject of names, apparently J.T. Tuimolou's mother doesn't think much of her son's name being short-handed to "JTT."

Tuimolou's given first name is Jaylahn (pronounced Jalin), but he prefers to go by his initials. Therefore, referring to him by adding an extra "T" is factually wrong.

"I'm going to clear this up for my mom," Tuimolou told reporters last year. "J.T. are just my initials. My real name is Jaylahn, so that's where J.T. comes from. But there is no extra 'T'."

In case you didn't already know, Tuimolou is of Samoan descent, and his mom's name is Alofa. That is the Samoan word for "love."

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Running Game Bounces Back But Is Decimated By Injury

Ohio State saw its running game get back on track against Indiana after suffering a trio of clunky outings following the Buckeyes' idle week. Against the Hoosiers, OSU dashed for 340 yards, resulting from 7.9 yards per carry, while running back Miyan Williams ran for 147 yards on 15 totes.

However, the running backs unit was again hampered by injury during the second quarter, after Williams' right leg was tangled up on a tackle by Indiana linebacker Aaron Casey, prompting to Williams to remain on the turf for several minutes before being helped off the field without putting weight on his right leg. This came after TreVeyon Henderson was already ruled unavailable for the contest.

Following that play, running back responsibilities fell on freshman back Dallan Hayden, who performed admirably by tallying 102 yards on 19 carries. The Buckeyes also got creative with their running game, giving the ball to wide receivers Xavier John-

son – who previously played running back – and Marvin Harrison Jr. Quarterback C.J. Stroud and tight end/fullback Mitch Rossi also carried the ball.

Not only did the Buckeyes have their running backs room take another hit health-wise, but there was also the absence of right tackle Dawand Jones – who was a game-time decision but did not play. His spot was filled by offensive tackle Josh Fryar, who has played a significant role as an extra blocker in Ohio State's jumbo formations this season.

Fryar helped spring several chunk runs from Williams and Hayden throughout the ballgame, showing an ability to get to the second level in run-blocking scenarios. After the game, head coach Ryan Day noted that Fryar played well in his first career start.

"We were hoping to get Dawand out there," Day said. "He was out there in pre-game – it was a game-time decision. He was close, just didn't feel like he could do it. Tough call. These are tough decisions. Part of the decision – we knew we had Josh, and Josh had been playing well as the extra tight end and had a good week of practice. We had confidence in Josh to put him in the game. I'll have to see the film – I don't think it was perfect – but I feel like he played well. When you don't notice a tackle, that's usually pretty good, but we'll have to watch the film and see. A couple of times it looked like he was doing a pretty good job of protection."

OSU-Maryland Set For 3:30 Kickoff

Ohio State's contest at Maryland on Nov. 19 will be a 3:30 p.m. kickoff on ABC, the

2022 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 3	NOTRE DAME	W, 21-10	ABC	7-3, 35-32 win over Navy
Sept. 10	ARKANSAS STATE	W, 45-12	BTN	3-7, 35-33 win over UMass
Sept. 17	TOLEDO	W, 77-21	FOX	7-3, 28-21 win over Ball State
Sept. 24	WISCONSIN	W, 52-21	ABC	5-5, 24-10 loss to Iowa
Oct. 1	RUTGERS	W, 49-10	BTN	4-6, 27-21 loss to Michigan State
Oct. 8	at Michigan State	W, 49-20	ABC	5-5, 27-21 win over Rutgers
Oct. 22	IOWA	W, 54-10	FOX	6-4, 24-10 win over Wisconsin
Oct. 29	at Penn State	W, 44-31	FOX	8-2, 30-0 win over Maryland
Nov. 5	at Northwestern	W, 21-7	ABC	1-9, 31-3 loss to Minnesota
Nov. 12	INDIANA	W, 56-14	FOX	3-7, 56-14 loss to Ohio State
Nov. 19	at Maryland	3:30 p.m.	ABC	6-4, 30-0 loss to Penn State
Nov. 26	MICHIGAN	12 p.m.	FOX	10-0, 34-3 win over Nebraska

Big Ten announced on Nov. 12.

This will be the Buckeyes' final road contest of the regular season before returning home to take on Michigan on Nov. 26, which is set for its usual noon kickoff. The Terrapins are 6-4 but have dropped their last two, falling to Wisconsin and Penn State.

Ohio State has not lost to Maryland in seven tries dating back to 2014, the first year that the Terrapins played in the Big Ten. The closest game, of course, was the Buckeyes' 52-51 nail-biter in overtime in 2018, which was only won because of a failed two-point conversion by Maryland. That was also the last time Ohio State played at College Park, Md., because of the conference schedule being adjusted in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Henderson Among 11 Inactives Against Indiana

Ohio State was, once again, without the services of Henderson and wide receiver Jason Smith-Njigba against Indiana.

The Buckeyes did receive some good news, as cornerback Cameron Brown was not listed on the availability report and returned to the lineup for Ohio State for the first time since before the off week. However, cornerback Denzel Burke – who did not appear on the injury report – did not play against Indiana. Wide receiver Kamryn Babb was also available for the first time this season, scoring an 8-yard touchdown – both his first career catch and score – in his debut.

Running back Chip Trayanum and offensive linemen Toby Wilson and Jones were listed as game-time decisions prior to the game, and all three did not play. Day said after the game that he expected Burke, Jones and Trayanum to return against Maryland. Day also noted that his team is dealing with the injury reality of college football in the month of November.

"It's this time of year, so guys are going to be banged up," he said. "It's just the way it goes. There were a lot of guys that played banged up today – a lot. These guys just didn't feel like they were ready to go play, and certainly, we're not going to put them in a game if they don't feel like they can play. But we're looking, hopefully, to get a full week of work out of them and see them play against Maryland."

OSU At No. 2 In AP Poll For Fourth Consecutive Week

After running away with a 56-14 victory over Indiana on Nov. 12, Ohio State remained at No. 2 in the most recent AP poll released Nov. 13. The Buckeyes have held the No. 2 spot since Oct. 16.

The top five were unchanged with No. 1 Georgia, No. 2 Ohio State, No. 3 Michigan,

No. 4 TCU and No. 5 Tennessee all emerging victorious, though the Horned Frogs were tested by then-No. 18 Texas, winning 17-10. The rest of the top 10 was rounded out by No. 6 LSU, No. 7 USC, No. 8 Alabama, No. 9 Clemson and No. 10 Utah. Oregon and UCLA each fell out of the top 10 due to upset losses to Washington and Arizona, respectively.

The Big Ten was represented by only three teams – Ohio State, Michigan and No. 11 Penn State. However Illinois and Minnesota received votes. All three of the Big Ten's ranked teams make their home in the conference's East Division.

UCLA endured the largest fall of any team, dropping seven spots from No. 9 to No. 16 after its loss to 4-6 Arizona. Washington saw the biggest rise, jumping from No. 24 to No. 15 after a back-and-forth upset of then-No. 6 Oregon. The several stunning results in the Pac-12 have severely dampened any hopes that the conference would send a representative to the College Football Playoff, as USC remains the only one-loss team in the conference.

Arnold, Mirco Brave Elements Against Wildcats

Ohio State's punt and field goal units took a blow during the Buckeyes' 54-10 win over Iowa when seventh-year long snapper Bradley Robinson sustained a leg injury during the third quarter before returning from the locker room with crutches, ceding snapping duties to sophomore Mason Arnold.

Robinson was unable to recover in time for Ohio State's road contests with Penn State and Northwestern or the home game with Indiana, opening the door for Arnold to tally the first three starts of his career.

"It feels bittersweet," Arnold said. "It was sad to see him go down. I look at him like a big brother to me. But it's an opportunity and I just decided that it was time to go to work, so I was ready."

While Arnold had to battle the raucous crowd at Beaver Stadium during his first career start, his second outing forced him to brave the elements when the Buckeyes and Wildcats competed with spitting rain and 40 mile-per-hour winds at Ryan Field.

Although Arnold hails from Tampa, Fla., an area of the country that experiences hurricanes and tropical storms, he noted that the conditions he faced against the Wildcats were among the worst he had seen in his life.

"That game was definitely a challenge for sure," Arnold said. "Those were the worst conditions that I've had to deal with in my life and in my career, just snapping and football in general."

"Being from Florida, we have pretty crazy storms and lightning – things of that na-

THE ROAD TO THE HORSESHOE AND BEYOND

Dr. Rex Kern, PH.D.
with Lee Caryer

Order your autographed copy today!
And as a *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* reader,
you'll receive a special discount.

Only \$40 for subscribers
Or \$35 for VIPs

"Take Woody's advice this time—
don't PASS on this book!"

Jeff Kaplan

Please mail a check for your purchase
to Lee Caryer at **975 Atlantic Ave.,
#676, Columbus, OH 43229**. Please
make all checks out to Rex Kern.

The perfect
Christmas gift
for family, friends,
clients, and OSU fans!



Upgrade Your Michigan Issues To First Class For Just \$6

Ohio State and Michigan will be playing the week of Thanksgiving. That means no mail on Thursday of that week, a critical day in our mail flow, because of the holiday. In hopes of getting Buckeye Sports Bulletin's Michigan Preview issue, with its popular Michigan Memories in it, to as many readers as possible before the noon kickoff on Nov. 26, we are offering readers the chance to upgrade their subscription to first-class mail in an envelope for both the Michigan Preview and Wrap Up for just \$6 to cover the added postage and envelope.

To make sure you get your subscription upgraded on time, call us at (614) 486-2202 to order by credit card. You can also mail your \$6 to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Either way, mention the "Michigan Upgrade."

The complete edition of each issue is also posted on our website at BuckeyeSports.com immediately upon completion of the paper, making the site a must for readers having continuing mail problems. There is also immediate coverage after each game, and readers can discuss the game on the Fan Forum, including "The Official Game Thread" with real-time comments from BSB staff members and readers throughout the game.

"We know that reading the paper online is not optimum, but this may prove to be a necessary option the week of Thanksgiving and the Michigan game," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said.

There are also additional electronic stories throughout the week, including coverage of Ryan Day's weekly press conference, as well as news from any other press availabilities leading up to The Game. Football recruiting is a 365-day-a-year process

these days, and the BSB staff has stepped up its coverage of Ohio State's quest for prep talent. We have also upped our basketball recruiting coverage, so be sure to check in regularly at BuckeyeSports.com.

Along with daily posts, we offer reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Additionally, staff members man the previously mentioned Fan Forum, interacting with subscribers on the hot topics of the day. Staffers and readers alike have also been reacting to recruiting efforts on the Forum's football and basketball recruiting threads.

We remind you again, the complete print edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is posted at BuckeyeSports.com at the time the issue is mailed and is available to subscribers free of charge, as is all the other content provided at the site.

If you are not already taking advantage of BuckeyeSports.com, BSB's 24/7 website, simply email your name, address and preferred email address to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com, and we will send back easy instructions on how to access the site. Don't forget, subscriptions@buckeyesports.com is our email address, not the website. We will send you directions on how to access the site.

If you are a current subscriber and have been unable to access all features on the site, please give us a call at the (614) 486-2202 number and we will help you gain access.

If you have any questions about BuckeyeSports.com, the \$6 Michigan upgrade, or your mail service, feel free to call us at the above number.

Stroud Displays Comfort As Runner Against NU, IU

Ohio State and Northwestern battled in adverse conditions, with wind speeds reaching as high as 40 miles per hour and rain drenching the playing surface at Northwestern.

The Buckeyes had attempted to throw the ball with and against the wind but could not find consistent success through the air. Although Stroud struggled to find a rhythm with his arm against the Wildcats, finishing with career lows in completion percentage (38.5 percent) and passing yards (76), he turned to his legs, which have been of little use since his 48-yard touchdown run on his first carry as a freshman against Michigan State. Stroud posted a career-high 79 rushing yards against the Wildcat defense and boosted Ohio State's ailing offense with several clutch runs in important moments.

"C.J. embraced it, and you could see what he could do," Day said about Stroud's rushing acumen against Northwestern. "I think it can be a weapon for us moving forward. I think we found something there, but there are pluses and minuses with that as well."

Although Ohio State got its passing game back on track against Indiana, with Stroud throwing for 297 yards and five touchdowns, the Buckeye signal caller again showed a willingness to take off, doing so on numerous occasions. Stroud was utilized as an option with his feet again against Indiana despite carrying the ball only four times.

He called his own number on a pair of third-and-short situations, but he was unable to convert as a tote toward the sideline on the Buckeyes' opening drive came a few inches short of the first-down marker. The

Continued On Page 6

ture," Arnold said. "When that happens, a lot of the time we don't play through that or we don't get those crazy winds. We don't get that 30-plus mile-per-hour wind that we had at Northwestern. And to perform and just get the job done in that game felt like a great accomplishment."

Mirco was also tasked with navigating the high-speed winds but did so with relative

success, amassing an average of 50.3 yards on seven punts while two of his kicks were downed inside the Northwestern 20-yard line.

Mirco also boomed a career-long punt of 77 yards – which sailed into the end zone for a touchback – while kicking with the wind at his back. While Mirco noted that he tried to adjust his style of kicks to fit the conditions,

he also emphasized the importance of just going out there and letting loose.

"You're just trying to practice different types of kicks and figure out what you can get the most out of," Mirco said. "Just trying to drive it and keep it low seemed to work the best, but there's not much you can do. I guess you just have to go out there swinging, hope for your best a little bit."

Hurry! Brutus Level VIPs To Be Recognized In The Michigan Issue

If you have wanted to show your support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program but are unable to participate at the Scarlet, Elite or Elite-Plus level, now is the time to sign up at the Brutus level for just \$50. Brutus level VIPs are recognized in BSB twice a year, and we will be running the complete list of Brutus VIPs in the upcoming Michigan Issue.

VIP donors help Buckeye Sports Bulletin stay alive and vibrant.

"We want to thank the many BSB readers who have stepped up and shown their support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "It is a true vote of confidence in what we are doing now, what we have done the previous 41 years and what we plan to do in the future."

A VIP upgrade can easily pay for itself each year with special VIP discounts and perks.

VIP subscribers enjoy a 20 percent discount at Conrads College Gifts. VIP subscribers also enjoy a 5 percent discount on any Ohio State football trip booked through Reynolds Travel. And VIP subscribers receive a certificate good for \$10 off at Roosters restaurants, the "Fun, Casual Joint," as well as a card good for \$10 off your next food purchase at any Cameron Mitchell Restaurant.

As mentioned, with the \$50 Brutus VIP upgrade, Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers will have their names and cities listed in two different issues annually as supporters of BSB.

Those who add \$100 to their subscriptions will have their names and cities listed in all 24 issues each year as BSB Scarlet patrons. Those who donate \$125 will be designated as Elite patrons in each issue.

And those who donate more than \$125 will have their names listed as Elite-Plus VIPs.

To upgrade your existing subscription to VIP status, with all the benefits that come with that designation, go to BuckeyeSports.com/vip-memberships to pay by credit card, or call us at (614) 486-2202 during regular business hours. If readers have questions about this program, they can call the same number.

The following are our Elite Wachsman, Elite-Plus, Elite and Scarlet VIP subscribers. **Elite Wachsman Donor (in honor of late BSB assistant publisher Karen Wachsman):** Roosters Restaurants Foundation.

Elite-Plus Donors: B2, Reston, Va.; Brian Bucher, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.;

Thomas E. Farish, Port St. Lucie, Fla.; Terry T. Farmer, Lancaster, Ohio; Sander Flaum, New York; Don Kersey, Springboro, Ohio; Dan LaVille, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jim Reichler, Toledo; In memory of Hugh and Dixie Rea, Washington Court House, Ohio; In memory of Lisa Rea, Greenfield, Ohio; The Russell Group United, Columbus; Bob Weber, Mishawaka, Ind.

Elite Donors: Robert Ankerman, Holland, Mich.; Marshall Beck, Sarasota, Fla.; Phillip Blue, Prior Lake, Minn.; Fredrick Bradshaw, Columbus; In memory of Norwin Brovitz, Oakmont, Pa.; Iris Cremean, Walbridge, Ohio; Richard Dunkelberger, Groveport, Ohio; Fred Fingerhut, Phoenix; Chalk Fry DDS, Sarasota, Fla.; Laura Granich, Columbus; Paul E. Hackett, The Villages, Fla.; James Hamilton, Murrysville, Pa.; Mike Heimann, Ashland, Ohio; Curtis High, Beavercreek, Ohio; Freddie and Joe Huber, Walpole, Mass.; Carl R. Jeffery DDS, Van Wert, Ohio; Bill Judy, Dublin, Ohio; Kris Kersey, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Frank Klaus, Pepper Pike, Ohio; Fred Krisch, Cleveland; Paul Lappert, Columbus; Larry Larson, Ladera Ranch, Calif.; Alan Lord, Reynoldsburg, Ohio; Dr. Jonathan Lucas, Portsmouth, Ohio; Allen McMillin Jr., Logan, Ohio; Mike from Marietta, Ga.; Col. George R. Nelson, New Albany, Ohio; OSU65Bob, Mishawaka, Ind.; Theodore Pegram, Eden Prairie, Minn.; Greg Place, Greenville, Ohio; James Robinson Jr., Council Bluffs, Iowa; Charlie Shaffer, Edison, Ohio; Bill Short, Sparta, Ohio; Mark Skinner, Columbus; Kyle Smith, Marietta, Ga.; James Thomas, The Villages, Fla.; Chuck Underwood, Miamisburg, Ohio; Dan van Blaricom, Dublin, Ohio; Beth Wachsman, Columbus; Elliott S. Wettstein, Waverly, Ohio; J.D. Wientjes, Peoria, Ill.; David J. Young, Supply, N.C.; Anonymous, Columbus; Anonymous, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Anonymous, Girard, Ohio; Anonymous, Lancaster, Ohio; Anonymous, Lewisburg, W.Va.

Scarlet VIPs: Anthony Ananthanarayanan, Rochester, Mich.; Greg Brooks, Gahanna, Ohio; Marty Brumbaugh, Troy, Ohio; Joseph A. Cusma Sr., Massillon, Ohio; Dennis Dahm, Sandusky, Ohio; Julie Ellis, Apple Valley, Calif.; Mike Freeburn, Columbus; Tom Goila, Cincinnati; Richard G. Hannan Jr., Chillicothe, Ohio; Doug Harris, Lima, Ohio; Ed Helal, Ashland, Ohio; Phil Helal, Strongsville, Ohio; Dave Palmer, Washington, Mich.; Lawrence Romanoff, Powell, Ohio; Jim Shaw, Lake Forest, Calif.; William Torok, Girard, Ohio; Anonymous, Dallas; Anonymous, Norwalk, Ohio.

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

second third-down attempt saw Stroud get stuffed in the backfield on a broken option play during the third quarter. The Inland Empire, Calif., native did find himself in the open field once against the Hoosiers, breaking off down the left sideline with room to work with before his left foot grazed out of bounds, causing the play to be whistled dead after a gain of 8 yards. "I was a little mad at myself for doing that. I felt like I made a good move by trying to pump the ball, trying

to get to the will linebacker, (Aaron Casey), trying to just make him miss," Stroud said. "I thought I did that. I tried to tightrope to the sideline. Honestly, I haven't been out there in (a while) trying to navigate, so I'm kind of getting back used to it."

Short-Yardage Shortcomings Disappointing To Day

By the end of the first quarter of action, Ohio State's issues converting third- and fourth-and-short had already arrived on the scene against Northwestern.

The Buckeyes failed to convert a third-and-1 at their own 34-yard-line, gaining no yards on a handoff to Williams on Ohio State's third possession of the game, and they punted the ball back to the Wildcats.

Facing another third-and-1 on its very next possession, OSU again handed the ball to Williams for no gain. It attempted to do the same on fourth-and-1 but was stopped short for a turnover on downs.

"Of all the things that I was disappointed with Saturday running the football, short yardage was the one that was high on the list," Day said after the Northwestern

game. "You know they're all going to be in (the box), and we've got to convert in those situations."

As Ohio State's running game in general has struggled since the off week, Day and company are taking special care to fix the team's efficiency in converting short-yardage situations. Doing so could be the difference between winning and losing as the competition gets tougher through November and the postseason.

"I think it was a combination of things," Day said. "There were multiple things, and that hurt us on third down. But we didn't quite get the movement we wanted to. We didn't quite enter the blocks the right way. You'll see a couple of them where we're just not flush on the blocks. Then there's one scheme that we could have done a better job with, but overall it was just that (the defense) was down in there and we weren't getting enough movement. We've got to get our pads down lower. We've got to fit those blocks a little bit better."

There were some external factors affecting Ohio State as well.

Right guard Matthew Jones has dealt with some ailments, as have both starting running backs in Williams and Henderson. Extreme wind gusts limited the Buckeyes' ability to throw the ball against Northwestern, meaning the Wildcats could load the box with extra defenders and focus on stopping the run. Day noted he doesn't want to make excuses, though.

"There's going to be conditions, there's going to be injuries, bumps and bruises. At the end of the day, we've got to go out there and produce," Day said. "That's the bottom line."

Day is looking for improvement from the whole of his offense when it comes to gaining ground on the ground.

"Going back and watching the film, we've got to block better, we've got to run better, we've got to do a better job equating numbers, all of the above," Day said in preparation for Indiana. "Certainly in games where they know you're going to run it, you have to come up with answers. But just moving forward in general, we know we can do a better job. So we'll get back to work this week and get after it."

Ohio State's struggles in short yardage reared their ugly head again vs. Indiana. The Buckeyes' opening drive stalled on the third-and-1 run by Stroud. The Buckeyes saw back-to-back second-quarter possessions also get derailed by short-yardage failures, as a Stroud incompletion on third-and-2 prompted Ohio State to punt, while a pair of stuffed runs on third-and-2 and fourth-and-1 caused the Buckeyes to turn the ball over on downs in Indiana territory.

OSU Names Players Of The Week For Northwestern Game

Following the win over Northwestern on Nov. 5, Ohio State announced its players of the game for the matchup. Defensive tackle Taron Vincent and safety Ronnie Hickman took home co-Defensive Player of the Game honors, while Mirco grabbed Special Teams Player of the Game.

Anchoring OSU's defensive line from the middle in a physical, run-heavy game, Vincent picked up five tackles – four solo – against the Wildcats. Hickman grabbed 10 total takedowns of his own, second most on the team against Northwestern behind line-

backer Tommy Eichenberg's 13 stops. Six of his tackles were solo efforts.

Mirco's performance in the elements earned him the honor, while no players on offense received player of the week honors as the Wildcats outgained the Buckeyes 285-283.

Armed Forces Merit Award Honors Johnson's Foundation

Ohio State offensive tackle Paris Johnson Jr. was honored on Nov. 11 as his foundation, the Paris Johnson Jr. Foundation, was named the winner of the Armed Forces Merit Award.

Johnson's foundation specializes in serving disabled veterans, as well as disadvantaged student-athletes, by providing them with resources and benefits to ease their situations. The foundation, which was set up with his mother, Monica Daniels, when Johnson was still in high school, has raised more than \$10,000.

"Growing up, I always told my mom that when I had the chance to play in the NFL, I wanted to use that money to be able to give back to people," Johnson told ESPN. "I wanted to use that platform of being an NFL player to be able to spread awareness about the things that I found that are very important."

The Paris Johnson Jr. Foundation was selected by the Football Writers Association of America from a pool of 50 other nominees for the award. The Armed Forces Merit Award aims to "honor an individual and/or group within the realm of the sport of football."

"The foundation established by Paris and his mother is very unique where a student-athlete and his family are actively involved with helping military veterans," said Brant Ringler, executive director of the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl. "While playing a key role on one of the nation's top collegiate football teams, what Paris is accomplishing through his foundation is remarkable. We hope at least one player on every college football program in the United States can follow the exemplary example that Paris has set."

Johnson was also recently named a semifinalist of the Rotary Lombardi Award, which is given annually to the most outstanding offensive or defensive lineman in the country who also exemplifies strong character.

Day also penned a letter of support to the FWAA ahead of Johnson earning the award, noting that Johnson is someone who cares deeply about his community.

"(He's a) wonderful civilian, one who cares and takes care of those who are less fortunate. He does this through his foundation. These efforts that Paris does with his foundation are indicative of the leader that he is ... on the field and off," Day wrote. "He is a conscientious young man, an incredibly sincere and thoughtful individual, and someone I can't wait to see succeed in life as an upstanding citizen."

Eichenberg A Semifinalist For Lott IMPACT Trophy

Eichenberg has been named a semifinalist for the Lott IMPACT Trophy, an award that recognizes athletic performance and personal character.

Eichenberg – one of Ohio State's six team captains this season – has been a leader on and off the field for the Buckeyes, lead-

Ohio State Fans!

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

Weekly September through November
Five times from January through mid-March
Biweekly mid-March through mid-May
Monthly December, June through August

Some Ohio State sports fans need more information on the Buckeyes than they can find in their local newspaper. Buckeye Sports Bulletin is for those fans. By subscribing to Buckeye Sports Bulletin, they receive 24 issues a year featuring:



- In-depth coverage of all Ohio State sports
- The latest comments from coaches and players
- The latest in recruiting information
- Personality profiles
- Features on former Buckeye greats
- Rosters, schedules, statistics, photos
- Check us out on the Web at www.BuckeyeSports.com

1 Year, \$104.95

1 Year, First Class Mail, \$174.95

2 Years, \$175.95

2 Years, First Class Mail, \$299.95

I want to know more about Ohio State sports. I am enclosing \$ _____

Money Order Check MasterCard Visa Discover Amer. Express

Credit Card # and Exp. Date _____

Credit Card Orders Accepted 24 Hours A Day
Call (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

Mail To: **Buckeye Sports Bulletin**
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
www.BuckeyeSports.com

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago — 1982

At precisely 1:52 p.m. Eastern Standard time on Nov. 6, 1982, Gary Williams, who already held nearly every Ohio State University pass catching record, had his name etched into the NCAA record books.

It was a record that reflected durability, endurance and desire.

With 3:18 left on the first-quarter clock as the Buckeyes were playing Minnesota, Williams hauled in a 12-yard pass from quarterback Mike Tomczak to tie the NCAA record of consecutive regular-season games with at least one pass reception.

That catch, one of three Williams would have in the Buckeyes' 35-10 win over the visiting Golden Gophers, upped Williams' string to 42 straight games. He shared the record with Arizona State's John Jefferson (1974-77) and Marshall University's John Fillies (1973-76).

35 Years Ago — 1987

OSU coach Earle Bruce said Buckeye football saw its darkest day following the 31-10 shellacking by Indiana earlier in the season. It grew darker after a 13-7 dumping by Michigan State. Then it was pitch black.

"I'm not looking at this game at all," the coach said. "I can't even think about it right now. I'm tremendously upset and I have to bite my tongue. Obviously, that's the best thing to do."

Those were the words of Bruce after the Buckeyes (5-3-1, 3-3) were beaten for the fifth time in seven years by Wisconsin (3-6, 1-5), 26-24. OSU self-destructed Nov. 7 in Camp Randall Stadium, committing six turnovers in the second half. The Badgers took advantage of three of those bumbles, including an interception of a Tom Tupa pass and 35-yard return for a touchdown by safety Greg Thomas, to score 13 points and overcome a 24-13 halftime deficit.

30 Years Ago — 1992

Everyone always knew Steve Tovar was one of the best college linebackers in the game. But who knew he was really this good?

Continuing to elevate his game to another level, Tovar spearheaded a defensive charge on Nov. 14 that helped Ohio State beat Indiana 27-10 on the road and clinch a berth in the Citrus Bowl on New Year's Day.

Tovar was credited with 11 tackles on the afternoon, although it seemed as though he had many more. Ten of those stops were unassisted, and he also added a blocked punt, one sack and an important interception, his second of the season.

"I've been hearing from people all along that I have the potential to dominate games, and I don't see why I can't do it week in and week out," Tovar said. "I just seem to be peaking a little bit later, but better late than never, especially going into the Michigan game."

"I think I've proven that I'm one of the better linebackers in the country, if not the best, and it's just up to what people think of me after that. I know what I can do."

25 Years Ago — 1997

As basketball coach Jim O'Brien so aptly put it, his Buckeyes would have to be from another planet to think other teams weren't

licking their chops at the thought of playing OSU.

With inside players Jermaine Tate and Shaun Stonerook off the team "due to failure to live up to their obligations as student-athletes" and guards Damon Stringer and Neshawn Coleman out with injuries, even a low-grade MAC program such as Kent – which was scheduled to take on OSU in the season opener on Nov. 19 – had to like its chances.

And it didn't help the Buckeyes' psyche any that just about every conceivable vulnerability was exposed in a 73-51 exhibition loss to Marathon on Nov. 13 at St. John Arena.

"We just let it go in the second half, and I couldn't tell you why it happened," said a befuddled Jon Sanderson.

20 Years Ago — 2002

Twice in the final two minutes of Ohio State's Nov. 16 game at Purdue, the ball was in the air for deep pass attempts.

Both times, an OSU player came down with the ball, and that was, in essence, the game as the third-ranked Buckeyes preserved their undefeated record with a 10-6 win over the Boilermakers.

OSU appeared to be headed toward its first defeat in 11 games, trailing Purdue 6-3 with the clock rolling inside two minutes. Even worse, the Buckeyes were facing a fourth-and-1 at the Purdue 37.

With the Boilers expecting a run, OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel exploited a mismatch by hurling a 37-yard touchdown pass to Michael Jenkins with just 1:36 left.

Then, as the OSU defense held on for dear life, two-way starter Chris Gamble broke back and intercepted a bomb from Purdue quarterback Kyle Orton with 45 seconds left.

"Championship teams make those kinds of plays," lamented Purdue coach Joe Tiller.

15 Years Ago — 2007

For 10 straight weeks, Ohio State relied on a smothering defense that simply refused to allow opposing teams to breathe. On Nov. 10, though, the Buckeyes could not solve the puzzle that was Illinois quarterback Isaiah "Juice" Williams.

As a result, the Illini came up with their first victory over a No. 1-ranked team since 1956, Ron Zook got his first signature win as Illinois head coach, and OSU went down to defeat for the first time, absorbing a 28-21 defeat in front of the fifth-largest crowd ever to witness a game in Ohio Stadium.

Williams finished the afternoon completing 12 of 22 passes for 140 yards and four touchdowns while adding 70 yards on 16 carries. The sophomore QB led the Illinois offense to 400 total yards and four touchdowns. None of the Buckeyes' previous 10 opponents had cracked the 350-yard mark or scored more than 17 points.

"I don't think they were doing anything we hadn't seen," linebacker Marcus Freeman said. "I think the thing that they were doing was that they were executing. (Williams) was making plays with his feet and his arm. That's tough. He's a great quarterback, and he was the best today."

10 Years Ago — 2012

The Ohio State men's basketball team had to wait a week lon-

ger than anticipated to play its first games away from Value City Arena after its originally scheduled season opener in the Carrier Classic was canceled due to condensation on the court, but the Buckeyes returned home from their road trip to Uncasville, Conn., and the Mohegan Sun Arena as champions.

Backed by junior forward Deshaun Thomas, who averaged 25.0 points per game through the Buckeyes' first three contests of the season, Ohio State captured the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Tip-Off Tournament title with a 77-66 victory over Washington on Nov. 18.

Scoring in every way imaginable, Thomas tied his career high with 31 points and added eight rebounds to lead the No. 4 Buckeyes to the victory over Washington.

"We haven't played against anyone like him this year," Washington head coach Lorenzo Romar said. "He came out and he was on fire. He couldn't miss anything."

Five Years Ago — 2017

Keita Bates-Diop did everything in his power to ensure the Chris Holtmann era at Ohio State started on the right foot. Playing in his first game since having surgery on his left leg in January, Bates-Diop scored a team-high 19 points on 9-of-12 shooting and grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds in Ohio State's 95-64 season-opening win over Robert Morris on Nov. 10, Holtmann's first game as the Buckeyes' head coach.

Bates-Diop, who had been medically cleared to resume activities in June, said it wasn't strange being on the court again after the layoff.

"I came back a few months ago, so it wasn't like I just came back," he said. "I've had practice and scrimmages to get back and feel good."

One Year Ago — 2021

No matter how impressive Garrett Wilson's stats were from Ohio State's 59-31 thumping of Purdue at home on Nov. 13, they do not tell the full story of the impact the junior wideout had on the Buckeyes offensively. And that's saying something, given that the stat sheet read as strongly in Wilson's favor as it had for nearly any Buckeye that season – 10 receptions on 11 targets for 126 yards and three scores, adding a fourth TD and 51 more yards on his lone rush of the game.

Those numbers didn't account for the impact Wilson had on the field, drawing defenders, often two or three at a time, and clearing up space everywhere else for his teammates to make plays. With Wilson's big-play ability to worry about, the Boilermakers' defense was stretched, allowing a season-high equaling 59 points and 624 yards to the Buckeyes.

With the concussion symptoms that held him out of the 26-17 victory against Nebraska on Nov. 6 in Lincoln out of the way, Wilson was free to reintroduce himself as a budding superstar

"Honestly, I just came out here today and did what I love doing," Wilson said. "I missed it so much last week. I don't ever want that to happen again. To have a game like today, I just feel good."

ing the defense with 92 tackles (11 for loss), 2½ sacks and an interception returned for a touchdown.

He's made a strong turnaround playing under defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, who said Eichenberg is tough, driven and focused.

"He has the respect of the defense and continues to improve," Knowles said earlier this season.

The other semifinalists for the Lott IMPACT Trophy – of which the winner will be announced on Dec. 11 – are Alabama linebacker Will Anderson and safety Jordan Battle, Clemson linebacker Trenton Simpson, Georgia defensive lineman Jalen Carter, Kansas State defensive end Felix Anudike-Uzomah, LSU defensive end BJ Ojulari, Penn State cornerback Joey Porter Jr. and USC defensive lineman Tuli Tuipulotu.

Eichenberg is also a semifinalist for the Bednarik and Butkus awards, which honor the best defensive player and the best linebacker in college football, respectively.

Egbuka Named Semifinalist For Hornung Award

Egbuka has been named a semifinalist for the Paul Hornung Award, given annually to the most versatile player in all of college

football.

Egbuka has emerged as one of Stroud's favorite targets this season, hauling in 51 receptions for 832 yards, both of which place him second on the team behind Harrison. Day has also used Egbuka as a change-of-pace on the ground, where he's carried the ball eight times for 80 yards and two touchdowns off various wide receiver sweeps.

The Washington native has also served as the team's primary punt returner all season, with 11 returns for 75 yards for a 6.8-yard per-return average. He's also returned one kickoff for 25 yards.

Created by the Louisville Sports Commission with the help of Hornung himself, the Paul Hornung Award was created in 2010 to recognize and award versatile, high-level performers in the sport of college football. Hornung, a former NFL Hall of Fame running back for the Green Bay Packers from 1957-66, passed away in 2020.

Andy Anders, Jack Emerson and Braden Moles contributed to this report. For up-to-the-minute Ohio State news and discussion, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com and the BSB Fan Forum, available free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

Buckeye Sports BulletinBoard

RULES AND RATES: 20 cents per word, 10 cents for more than one insertion. Minimum order of \$5. No agency discounts. Make checks payable to Buckeye Sports Bulletin. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express.

All ads are uniformly set with the first two words set in boldface capital letters at no charge. However, no other words may be set in boldface. Anyone planning a larger or more distinct ad may receive our ad rate card upon request.

We reserve the right to request additional information or merchandise be submitted from advertiser prior to acceptance of an ad, and we reserve the right to refuse advertisements considered objectionable.

Deadline is one week prior to publication date. Call (614) 486-2202 or write P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212 for info.

FOR SALE — OSU-MICHIGAN Game, 1975-original RADIO broadcast on CD! Woody's last great team & Archie's last UM game as Bucks go 11-0! Three-disk set runs 3½ hours! Listen in your car! \$25 + \$3 S & H. Call 1-630-527-8890!

WANTED TO buy: OSU football memorabilia and equipment, programs, pennants, glasses, books, jerseys, helmets, ticket stubs. One item or a hundred. Will travel. Call George at (614) 506-1081.

WANTED TO buy: OSU basketball tickets/stubs from the 1960s, '70s, '80s, '90s & 2000s. Call Mike at (704) 995-0414.

WANTED TO buy: OSU football memorabilia, programs, ticket stubs, pennants, championship rings, gold pants, helmets, autographs, game-used equipment, small or large collections. Call Chris at (419) 957-6789.

BSB PUBLISHER Frank Moskowitz and other members of the BSB staff are available to speak at your business, social or alumni group meetings. Informative and fun. Call (614) 486-2202 for details.

OSU Offense Steps Up After Williams' Injury

Continued From Page 1

room after suffering a right leg injury in the second quarter, the Buckeyes' ground attack – which finished with 340 rushing yards on 43 carries, good for 7.9 yards per attempt – helped lead a 56-14 win over Indiana in front of 103,888 fans at Ohio Stadium.

Williams was the leader of the day, finishing with a game-high 147 yards on 15 carries, including a 48-yard rushing touchdown early in the second quarter. It helped assuage concerns – at least for the moment – about Ohio State's short-yardage rushing, as he started the scoring run by squeezing past the right side of the offensive line on a third-and-1.

Later in the frame, he was brought down on a 4-yard gain and had his right leg rolled up on. He left on the cart and returned to the sideline in the second half on crutches and in street clothes, also sporting a boot on his right foot.

"We'll have to see (on Miyan)," Day said after the game. "It didn't look like, based on what we saw here in the locker room, that it was going to be something that was going to be really long term, so we'll see how he feels overnight and then we're hoping to get TreVeyon back for next week."

Williams had slightly more confidence than his head coach, tweeting out after the game that he was good to go. In his stead, it was freshman Dallan Hayden who received the majority of the work. The first-year player out of Memphis, Tenn., finished the contest with 102 yards on 19 carries, not quite up to the standard of Williams, but still a solid enough outing after being thrust into action.

"It's been frustrating, obviously, not having a full-strength room there," Day said. "The positive spin on that is the depth has shown and we've been able to keep that going. I think Dallan had some really nice runs today. He's got good feet, good vision, and he's a really good young player."

Xavier Johnson even got into the action,

ripping off a 71-yard rushing touchdown early in the fourth quarter that saw him weave through the entire Indiana defense while receiving several blocks from his teammates. Fives scores through the air courtesy of Stroud, who finished 17 of 28 for 297 yards, put the game entirely out of reach as Ohio State's defense allowed just 269 total yards on the afternoon and forced nine three-and-outs, a season high for the Buckeyes.

"At the end of the day, we're trying to get a three-and-out on every series," safety Lathan Ransom said. "We're not excited about one three-and-out. We're trying to get one every time we step on the field. When we get them, we're excited and we can't wait to get back on the field."

The main key in the win, though, was the resurgence in the running game, which could be considered somewhat surprising given Ohio State's shift on the offensive line for the game. Right tackle Dawand Jones, who had manned the position in each of Ohio State's previous nine games this season, was listed as a game-time decision. Despite warming up in pads, he did not take the field, leaving the responsibilities to back-up offensive lineman Josh Fryar.

Fryar performed admirably, springing Williams on several runs in the first half and carrying his weight in pass protection, where Jones has been one of Ohio State's best this season. His performance, though, was just one part – along with Williams looking healthier, at least before leaving the game, than he did against Northwestern – of the boosted rushing attack against which Indiana was able to offer little resistance.

"You see Miyan struggling through injuries and still going," Stroud said. "(TreVeyon) is trying to get back as quickly as possible. Dallan did a great job today. Of course, Xavier and then Mitch (Rossi), as well, stepped in. I think everybody on this team really wants to have each other's back, and we're just hungry for more."

What matters is Ohio State making sure this game wasn't an aberration. The Buck-



SONNY BROCKWAY

PAY UP – Ohio State safety Lathan Ransom (12) had a breakout game against Indiana, finishing with nine tackles, 1½ sacks and a blocked punt, the first for the Buckeyes since 2019.

eyes' next opponent in Maryland on Nov. 19 doesn't strike fear into opposing offensive coordinators in terms of stopping the ball, but that isn't the case for Michigan, which will visit Ohio Stadium on Nov. 26 and has limited opponents this season to just 72.7 rushing yards per game, best in the nation.

Not to mention, Ohio State's short-yardage execution – even with some flashes, like on Williams' long touchdown run – is still not up to par. When the Buckeyes needed 3 or fewer yards to go on third or fourth down against the Hoosiers, they converted a first down or scored on just two of those seven instances, with the failed attempts resulting in a trio of punts and a turnover on downs. Those seven plays featured six runs and one pass, with most of the runs going straight up the gut.

"I'm probably being stubborn there," Day said. "But I still think we need to get better movement, we need to run harder, we need to get the first down. I think we had one third down that we split for (Miyan's touchdown). That was good. But still not good enough."

If Ohio State wants to keep this season going after the annual rivalry game and avoid the letdown and embarrassment of last year's outing in Ann Arbor, carrying momentum from this contest into the final stretch – as well as continuing to solve issues that pop up with the offense – will be pivotal for the Buckeyes.

"There was a little bit of an edge to the offense this week," Day said. "I think that was all week in practice, and I think we've got to keep that going. That's the only way we're going to reach our goals."

Ransom Pays Off For Buckeyes

Williams shone on offense, but it was Ransom who ruled the day for the defense.



9762 Sawmill Parkway
POWELL

5637 Woerner Temple Road
DUBLIN

3140 Kingsdale Center
UPPER ARLINGTON

\$10 OFF
PURCHASE OF \$50 OR MORE
Does not include alcoholic beverages. Dine in only. Not valid with other offers. Tax not included. Expires 12/31/22



MEXICAN SEAFOOD & TAQUERIA
6211 Cleveland Ave • **COLUMBUS**



\$6 OFF
PURCHASE OF \$30 OR MORE
Does not include alcoholic beverages. Dine in only. Not valid with other offers. Tax not included. Expires 12/31/22





The third-year safety finished with nine tackles (second most behind linebacker Steele Chambers' 10 stops), 1½ sacks, a pass breakup and a blocked punt in the third quarter that was recovered by Johnson at Indiana's 2-yard line, setting up a touch-down just two plays later.

On that blocked punt, Ransom fired off the line of scrimmage and was given a direct path to Indiana punter James Evans. Ransom wasted no time, closing the distance and getting his hands up right as Evans attempted to boot the ball away. It was the first blocked punt for Ohio State since former cornerback Sevyn Banks blocked a punt by Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 21, 2019.

"He was all over the place," Day said of Ransom. "He did a really good job with (special teams coordinator) Parker Fleming on that adjustment. That was something that was a little bit of an adjustment based on what they were doing. He was able to put that on the field, and I think that's the sign of a mature player that you can talk about it on the sideline, make an adjustment and then go put it on the field in a game like that."

Other than defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau's outing at Penn State on Oct. 29, Ransom's afternoon was one of the more dominant performances by an individual defender for the Buckeyes this season. He's been a star all season, though, accounting for 54 tackles (35 solo) with 2½ tackles for loss, the previously mentioned sacks, two pass breakups, a fumble recovery, a forced fumble and an interception.

Ransom – who didn't even enter the season as a starter, working with the sec-

ond-string defense behind Josh Proctor to begin the year – has already been named a semifinalist for the Jim Thorpe Award, given annually to the top defensive back in college football. It's a list that cornerback Denzel Burke and safety Ronnie Hickman found themselves on at the beginning of the season, but they weren't on the updated midseason list, while Ransom had his name added.

This performance against Indiana came after notching nine tackles in Ohio State's win over Northwestern the previous week, though he wasn't pleased with how he played against the Wildcats.

"There were plays that I didn't make that I should have made," he said. "I had to fix that, and I'm working to get better every day because at this point that's what Coach (Perry Eliano) always stresses to us, 'How can we continue to get better?' and we're all just trying to find ways to do that."

This breakout game – and season, as a whole – for Ransom comes just 11 months after he suffered a fractured leg in Ohio State's Rose Bowl win over Utah on Jan. 1.

"I thought my world was coming to an end," Ransom said. "All I could think about was the season is over. It was traumatizing."

It was a miraculous recovery not only in that he's back on the field and participating for the Buckeyes, but is doing so at such a high level. He's been a leader on Ohio State's defense, both on and off the field, and has provided a very obvious spark for the Buckeye defense that has seen an impressive turnaround this season.

Furthermore, he was unavailable for spring practice as the rest of the defense

learned on the field under new defensive coordinator Jim Knowles. Since Ransom has been back, however, he's clearly become a favorite of Knowles, who has praised the Tucson, Ariz., native several times this season.

"He is one of those guys that never shows fear or frustration or fatigue," Knowles said. "Some guys have that ability to just run through a wall and not be fazed by it. He's one of those guys."

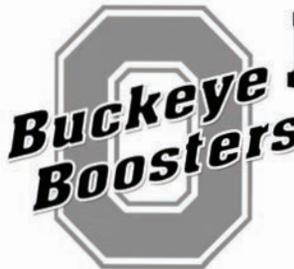
And he isn't letting his injury continue to impact him, either. While some might be hesitant to give it 100 percent after a serious injury like the one Ransom suffered, fearful of once again being sidelined, he has not allowed those thoughts to cross his mind.

"I tried to tell myself if I think about my leg or I'm thinking about this or that, I'm not

going to play the way I want," Ransom said. "At the end of the day I do what I need to do to prepare myself in practice and the rehab room, and once I'm on the practice field, I'm Lathan. No leg, no nothing."

Ransom said performances like his and the general play of the defense continue to give confidence to that side of the ball, but they're still hoping for more as the season progresses.

"I think that's what's so special about our defense is even with last week's performance and all the performances we've had so far, we've all had places where we can improve and we can continue to improve," he said. "We're going to have places to improve in this game. And I think that's what's so special about defense. We're all looking at ways for all of us to get better."



Join Us!

\$100/Year 614-326-3300
buckeyeboosters.com

...as we support the Buckeyes
on the road and more!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail check to:
Buckeye Boosters, 921 Chatham Ln., #301F, Columbus, OH 43221

Kick-Off Dinner

Travel to Away Football Games

Annual Celebrity Golf Outing

Meeting with Coaches, at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center

We are committed to your health and safety






Fairfield
BY MARRIOTT

Fairfield Inn & Suites Columbus / Dublin
7150 Sawmill Rd, Columbus, OH 43235 • 614-389-3036



COURTYARD
BY MARRIOTT

Courtyard Grove City
1668 Buckeye Place
Grove City, OH 43123
614-782-8292



TOWNEPLACE
SUITES
BY MARRIOTT

TownePlace Suites Columbus / Hilliard
4079 Lyman Dr, Hilliard OH 43026 • 614-541-9309



Fairfield
BY MARRIOTT

Fairfield Inn Grove City
1722 Buckeye Place
Grove City, OH 43123
614-808-8200



Best Western
We Care Clean.

BW Best Western.

Best Western Hilliard Inn & Suites
3831 Park Mill Run Dri, Hilliard, OH 43026 • 614-529-8118



Babb's Big Moment Headlines OSU's Big Win

In most cases, a fourth-quarter touchdown to increase a team's lead to 56-14 would largely be forgotten, but Ohio State's eighth score against Indiana is one that will be remembered in Columbus for quite some time.

With under nine minutes remaining in the game, Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud took the snap out of the shotgun before rolling to his right and firing a pass toward the front right corner of the end zone, finding fifth-year wide receiver Kamryn Babb for the game's final score. The 8-yard touchdown also doubled as Babb's first career catch for the Scarlet and Gray.

For Babb, the moment was the culmination of a nearly constant rehabilitation process, as he endured four ACL tears since his senior year of high school. Even this season, Babb found himself sidelined for Ohio State's first nine games due to a lower-body tweak.

But Babb's determination and faith led him back to the field and into that moment. As faith is a central fixture of Babb's life, he immediately fell to his knees following his score and bowed his head in prayer, as his ultimate goal was finally realized.

"The past five years, what's been a dream of mine is whenever I catch a touchdown, whenever that moment is, to get on my knees and give praise to Him, to Jesus Christ, because that's the only hope that I truly have," Babb said. "I love football. I love what it can do for so many people, but I just know there's a world with a whole bunch of stuff going on and so many people need hope. So if I could give and shine the light that Jesus had given me and give that to others, I think that's my responsibility as a son of God, a son of Jesus. That moment has kind of been on my mind for the past five years."

After Babb rose back to his feet, he was mobbed by his teammates in the end zone, with Stroud being the first one to wrap his arms around the wideout. The celebration carried over to the sideline, where Babb was hugged by virtually every Buckeye in his vicinity. The celebration carried on for so long that Ohio State was assessed a delay-of-game penalty on the ensuing extra point.

Babb noted that his teammates' reaction to the late-game score gave people a glimpse of the culture built by this Ohio State team.

"I think I hugged some people like five times," Babb said. "But in a moment like that, just the love, when you feel that and you see so many people around you just wanting to hug you, again, it just kind of leans back on the brotherhood and what we really have. It's not just a word to us. It's

GAME NOTEBOOK Jack Emerson

the guys in the locker room that make that possible and then the coaches that we have as well.

"I'm just thankful for each guy that we have. I know some guys are put in the spotlight more, but even for the people that aren't seen, just everybody from top to bottom is wonderful, and I'm grateful to be at this university and on this team. And I tell people all the time, I wouldn't have changed a thing just because the people make Ohio State what it is. I'm just thankful to be a part of it."

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said that it was Stroud's idea to throw the ball to Babb in the end zone, and Stroud noted that he felt some added nerves on the play because he wanted Babb to have that special moment.

"I didn't want to mess it up," Stroud said. "I was nervous. I saw the leverage that we had on the corner and I was like, 'Oh man, I better not mess this up on my guy,' so I'm happy I just made the throw."

"But honestly, words can't describe it. I don't care if I threw eight picks in that game or I didn't play well. It doesn't matter. You see somebody like Babb who's really put himself behind everything that he's been through and helped the team and pushed Christ because it's hard when you're on that type of path. People look at you to be perfect, and I definitely think that he's done his best to be that to us. And of course, I'm not perfect. He's not either, but at the end of the day, he strives to get to God every day and to reach people, and he's inspired me. We were definitely just happy for my guy."

It was a touchdown five years in the making for Babb, and Day expressed pride in his receiver and his drive to return to the field. The coach reflected on the several rehabilitation processes that Babb battled through while noting that he never showed any desire to give up on his goal of returning to game action.

"That's one of the reasons why college football is special," Day said. "That's one of the reasons why you coach, to see something like that happen. Hopefully there's somebody out there that's going through tough times that can see that as a motivation to overcome because it's one thing to see that moment right there. but it's all the



SONNY BROCKWAY

LONG TIME COMING — Ohio State fifth-year wide receiver Kamryn Babb (0) hauled in the first reception and touchdown of his career against Indiana. Babb overcame four torn ACLs to return to the field for the Buckeyes and was overcome with emotion after his scoring play.

morning workouts he had with (athletic trainer) Adam Stewart, it's all the mornings waking up on crutches. It's the disappointment.

"There was something special that went on on the field there, and you could see it with our team. I'm just really happy for him but really, selfishly, proud to be part of a moment like that. I just can't say enough about it, because there will be great wins and there will be great accomplishments here at Ohio State, but that, what he's overcome, is one of the great accomplishments. It's not something that people will see, but at least they were able to be a part of that right there. Those who were in the stadium were able to be a part of it. That's as special as I've been around."

Stroud emphasized that the impact of that touchdown wasn't just felt in the Ohio State locker room, but also by former Buckeyes who had the pleasure of playing with the two-time captain and Block "O" recipient.

"You don't even know the emotions that happen through fall camp and years where he's already been here," Stroud said. "His phone is probably going crazy with Chris (Olave), J.K. (Dobbins), probably just tapping into him because everybody has really been felt by Babb, from Chase Young to Justin Fields to Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson. I

bet you all of them are really happy for our guy, so that will just tell you that every year he's left a legacy."

Stroud Finds Comfort In Harrison, Stover

Stroud was, once again, tasked with vanquishing his opponent as well as the elements when the Buckeyes took the field against the Hoosiers.

Though Stroud had battled whipping winds and rainy conditions with little success a week prior against Northwestern, the Buckeye signal caller handled the freezing rain and snow that showered down on Ohio Stadium with relative ease during OSU's 56-14 win over Indiana. Stroud reintroduced himself as a Heisman Trophy front-runner against the Hoosiers, completing 17 of 28 passes for 297 yards and five touchdowns.

"He's the leader of our offense, there's no question about it," Day said. "When your leader is into it and pushing the guys and understands how important balance is in your offense, that's important. Overall I thought he was really on point today."

The usual suspects were the beneficiaries of Stroud's strong performance, with wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. and tight end Cade Stover each making their marks on the game.

Harrison provided one of the more high-

www.theredbricktapandgrill.com
292 E. Gates St.
Columbus (614) 444-2742

HAPPY HOUR 3-8pm Mon-Fri
Half off all 30 drafts • Half off select appetizers
Craft bottle specials all day

100 Craft Beers!

New Food & Cocktail Menu

Newly Renovated Patio with Fire Pit

Handmade Pizzas & In-House Smoked Meats




Game Analysis

What Worked Well

Ohio State's running game had a reawakening against Indiana. The Buckeyes picked up 340 rushing yards as a team, a new season high, and averaged 7.9 yards per attempt.

It took no time for Ohio State to find its rushing success as its second run of the day against the Hoosiers went for 10 yards on a handoff up the middle to running back Miyan Williams. The Buckeyes went up-tempo off the first-down gain and pitched it to Williams along the right side on the ensuing play, with right guard Matthew Jones and right tackle Josh Fryar picking up blocks to spring Williams for a 32-yard gain.

A bit of ingenuity also helped open up the ground attack, as on the next play, wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. – who led the team's efforts through the air with 135 receiving yards – was the recipient of a sneaky reverse that picked up 18 yards.

With Ohio State up 21-7 in the second quarter, Williams took a third-and-1 handoff, slipped one arm tackle from an Indiana linebacker and bolted 48 yards to the end zone to extend the Buckeye lead to 28-7 with 10:41 left in the first half. Physical blocks from Jones and center Luke Wypler helped create the seam, and the sight was one for the sore eyes of Buckeye fans who had watched Ohio State struggle on third-and-short against Northwestern on Nov. 5.

Williams finished his day with 15 carries for 147 yards and a score before exiting with an injury late in the second quarter. Freshman running back Dallan Hayden got in on the action as well with TreVeyon Henderson missing time, scoring his second touchdown of the season and finishing with 102 yards on 19 carries.

Xavier Johnson put an exclamation point on the team's day running the ball, zigzagging around waves of Indiana defenders during an electric 71-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter.

What Didn't Work

Ohio State's defense has evolved a clear identity at this point of the season: make big plays in exchange for surrendering a few.

Indiana struggled for the most part offensively, managing

just 14 points and 269 total yards with nine three-and-outs. The Buckeyes collected four sacks. But what little success the Hoosiers found offensively didn't come from sustained drives – rather, it came on big gains.

The Hoosiers' first touchdown in the waning moments of the first quarter came after a 49-yard completion against busted coverage to wide receiver Anderson Coby. With time winding down in the second quarter, Indiana quarterback Dexter Williams II found wide receiver Malachi Holt-Bennett for a 28-yard pickup that nearly put the Hoosiers in field-goal range before halftime, though Williams took a pair of sacks that ended the drive.

Indiana's final big play came on some trickery on a reverse to wide receiver Emery Simmons, who sped past the Buckeye defense for a gain of 44 yards on the first play of the second half. The Buckeye defense ultimately held on a fourth-and-2 from the OSU 23. In the past, defensive coordinator Jim Knowles has said he sets an objective of allowing fewer than five big plays in his scheme, and he technically met that mark by allowing only three, though they are plays Ohio State would still certainly like to have back.

For whatever big chunks the defense conceded, the Hoosiers still picked up just 4.2 yards per play.

Play Of The Game

Big plays were made on offense and defense at various points in Ohio State's contest with Indiana, but it's a special teams play that served to effectively end what remote hopes the Hoosiers may have had of a comeback.

Punting the ball for his seventh time in the game in the third quarter, Indiana punter James Evans caught a long snap and booted the pigskin right into the outstretched hands of Ohio State safety Lathan Ransom, who had exploded from the line of scrimmage and made his way to Evans without resistance.

Johnson pounced on the loose ball at Indiana's 2-yard line, setting up an easy touchdown pass from Stroud to tight end Cade Stover to extend the Buckeyes' lead to 35-7 before the eventual 56-14 final.

— Andy Anders

light-worthy plays of the afternoon during the second quarter when he high-pointed a floating pass from Stroud near the sideline while tapping his right foot in bounds, giving the Buckeyes a gain of 12 yards and a first down. He also blew by the Indiana secondary for a 58-yard score in the first quarter, lifting Ohio State's lead to 21-0.

All in all, Harrison finished the game with another strong stat line, hauling in seven receptions for 135 yards and the previously mentioned touchdown.

While Harrison did much of his damage in the first half, Stover keyed a pair of second-half touchdowns that put the game out of reach for good. Set up with tremendous field position at the Indiana 2-yard line thanks to a blocked punt by safety Lathan Ransom, Stroud found Stover wide open in the front left corner of the end zone, lifting Ohio State's lead to 35-7 with 9:33 remaining in the third quarter.

And it didn't take long for Stover to find pay dirt again. Stroud found his tight end for a 12-yard catch-and-run score just 1:55 later. Like Harrison's toe-tapping sideline grab, Stover's touchdown also elicited amazement from the Ohio State fan base as Stover shook an Indiana defender before plowing through another and diving into the end zone.

Sawyer Shreds IU With Sacks

Ohio State's defense remained in form against Indiana, holding the Hoosiers to only 269 yards of total offense while hardening on third downs, stonewalling its adversary to just a 3-of-17 conversion rate.

While the Buckeye defense kept on rolling, defensive end Jack Sawyer registered one of the best outings of his career to this point against the Hoosiers. Sawyer racked up three tackles, including 1½ sacks, to aid Ohio State's defensive efforts.

Entering the game with just two sacks on the season, he said that it felt good to finally get to the quarterback on a consistent basis.

"I just knew I had to keep working," Sawyer said. "I knew it was coming. Just kept my head down and kept working. I've had a couple of opportunities the last few games to get one or two here or there and just missed. It's kind of just football sometimes. I try not to let that affect me. And you know, it feels good to get home."

Although Sawyer remained quiet for much of the first half, he introduced himself to the contest in a big way late in the second quarter.

The Hoosiers were looking to add some much-needed points before the half and they marched from their own 18-yard line to Ohio State's 29-yard line in six plays, leaving IU with 34 seconds to cut into the deficit in plus-territory. However, a second-down sack from linebacker Steele Chambers and Ransom limited any hope that the Hoosiers would find the end zone. Sawyer made his mark on the very next play, flying off the left edge and shaking the tackle to lay a vicious hit on Indiana quarterback Dexter Williams II while the game clock dwindled to zero.

"I didn't know that I hit him that hard," Sawyer said. "Sometimes you feel when people leave their feet, and I kind of felt that so it felt nice to get a hit like that."

Sawyer, again, ended an Indiana drive by meeting Williams in the backfield, this time during the game's third quarter. With

the Hoosiers reeling from back-to-back scores from Stover and facing a third-and-7 at their own 39-yard line, Sawyer stunted inside while defensive tackle Taron Vincent crossed over to the outside. From there, Sawyer sprinted past the tackle before chasing down Williams for another sack, forcing a punt by the Hoosiers.

Sawyer said Vincent played a key role in freeing him up for the easy sack by giving him a clean lane to the quarterback.

"My first step, I realized that he slid real hard my way, and I knew I had the up-and-under right away," Sawyer said. "So I just hit it real quick. Taron did a good job ripping the B-gap and he came clean, they slid the opposite way and I was able to come free. So it worked out pretty well."

With Sawyer finally able to consistently finish sack opportunities against the Hoosiers, he also noted that the defense as a whole is starting to peak at the right moment.

"I think there's still a lot of things we can work on, but I think collectively we're starting to beat to the same tune and make plays," Sawyer said. "I just think we're all figuring out the defense as we're going on, and right now we're playing really good football, which is the best time to play good football – in November. I feel like we're clicking at the right time."



SONNY BROCKWAY

JACK ATTACK — Ohio State defensive end Jack Sawyer (33) had one of his better outings of the season against Indiana, finishing with 1½ sacks in the 56-14 win.

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 56, Indiana 14

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on the team's win: "That felt more like a normal game, other than the short-yardages, again. I was ready to bang my head against the wall. Other than that, I felt like it was more normal. It was great to get a big special teams play on the blocked punt. That was great. I thought we had a good rhythm in the game. We kept playing."

Indiana head coach Tom Allen on defending OSU's offense: "With all the playmakers that they have, the run-pass conflict that they put you in, it was a concern going in. You try to be able to load the box, take away the run – they have talented running backs. Then obviously, the receivers, if you isolate those guys, you try to double-cover a couple guys, you can't do more than that in pass situations."

Day on wide receiver Kamryn Babb's first career catch and touchdown: "This is somebody who's overcome four ACL surgeries. That's nine months of recovery times four. That's a long time to be in recovery, not being able to do something that you love. When it happened the last time, there were a lot of questions on whether he wanted to do (the rehab). He never batted an eye, said, 'This is what I want to do.' He put his faith in God, felt like this was his journey. What happened today in the stadium was magical."

Babb on what kept him going through all his injuries: "I love football, but mostly faith. Again, knowing that when I truly surrendered my life to Jesus and he showed me his love and who he is, I just wanted to share that with the world. We have such a big platform here at Ohio State, I just thought, you know, if it doesn't work out, then Jesus is still good, he's still king, he's still Lord, he's still my savior. It doesn't really matter."

Babb on having his family in attendance for the game: "I would say I'm just thankful, again, to have a family that supported me in times when I just felt like I couldn't keep going. They would always speak life into me, especially my pops. I started playing football because of him, and he's always been there. He's always been the main person that believes I'm the best receiver in the world, so having him behind me means so much. My mom and my whole family and teammates, I couldn't be more thankful just to have as many people that I do around me, because it's not just about me. It's about everybody else as well."

Ohio State defensive end Jack Sawyer on the play of safety Lathan Ransom: "I think he's been playing that well all year. We saw in fall camp – Coach (Jim) Knowles calls it pulling your trigger – and he pulls his trigger. He flies up and he doesn't hesitate. And when you know you've got that behind you, it makes you feel better. It makes you play a little more freely, too."

Ransom on his growth over the course of the season: "I didn't like the way I played, personally, last week. This week, I came with a different approach to the game. It was more focused, and I just appreciate my coaches for



SONNY BROCKWAY

THE BROTHERHOOD – Ohio State took some extra time after wide receiver Kamryn Babb's (0) fourth-quarter touchdown to celebrate with the fifth-year wideout, even being charged with a delay-of-game penalty on the extra point.

putting me in a situation to make plays and all thanks to them."

Ransom on his blocked punt: "I give all love to Coach (Parker) Fleming. He dialed up that punt block midgame and ended up running it. But we practice that. Every week we practice trying to block the punt without hitting the punter and stuff like that. I've been wanting to block a punt since I've been on punt block, so I'm just happy I finally got the chance to."

Sawyer on finishing with 1½ sacks and the team having four sacks: "It feels good to finally be able to get home a couple of times. I think as a unit we've all been so close a lot this year. We have so many pressures and we still have a decent amount of sacks, but being able to get home a couple times today definitely felt good."

Ransom on Ohio State's competitive stamina on defense: "We have such great leaders on defense that always keep us locked in, keep us focused and keep all our eyes on the one job. When we go out there, I think that our

leadership helps the defense just stay whole, and we're all one and we go out there and be successful together."

Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud on getting involved in the running game: "I feel like I am pretty decent at running the ball, but I have to get used to being out there again. I'm willing to do anything. I told them before the game, I'm willing to die for this team because it's so special. (Babb's touchdown) just shines light into the world of what we have in the Woody (Hayes Athletic Center) and what we have in our building. I'm willing to fight for my brothers, even if it means I've got to play with one hand, one foot, whatever the case may be."

Day on the festivities surrounding Military Appreciation Day: "It makes you realize football isn't as important as that. It puts everything in perspective. You're talking about people who are putting their lives on the line for the country so that we can have an opportunity to do something like this on a day like today. I know we don't take that for granted."

DEC. 2-3, 2022

FRIDAY 3-10:30P • SATURDAY 11A-6:30P
DUKE ENERGY CONVENTION CENTER

Bally SPORTS

★ REDSFEST ★

REDS

TM

Presented by  PNC
Benefiting the Reds Community Fund



FREE!
Reds Stickers &
Drawstring Backpack
First 8,000 Fans Each Day.



Scan for the latest
Redsfest info!

TICKETS ON SALE NOV. 7!

[reds.com](https://www.reds.com) /Redsfest • 513.381.REDS

Schedule and activities are subject to change.

Babb TD Highlights 56-14 Rout Of Hoosiers

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Quarterback C.J. Stroud threw five touchdowns passes, but only one will likely be remembered years from now by his Ohio State teammates and the 103,888 chilly fans in attendance at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 12 for the No. 2 Buckeyes' 56-14 win over Indiana.

Fifth-year senior Kamryn Babb completed the scoring in the fourth quarter with an 8-yard reception – both the first reception and touchdown of his career – after enduring four torn ACLs that cost him the 2018 and '19 seasons. He had played in only eight games previously.

He was mobbed by the players, many with tears in their eyes, to cap what was a routine win for the Buckeyes (10-0, 7-0) against the hapless Hoosiers (3-7, 1-6) except for another blow to the running backs corps.

Miyan Williams rushed for 147 yards before sustaining a right leg injury just before halftime. He walked off the field and was then carted to the locker room, where he returned after the half in street clothes and on crutches with a boot on his right foot.

OSU was already without TreVeyon Henderson, who had been the starter before being injured, and backups Chip Trayanum and TC Caffey, who were unavailable due to injuries. Freshman Dallan Hayden was the other lone scholarship running back, and he had 102 yards on 19 carries. Also coming to the rescue was wide receiver Xavier Johnson, who ripped off a 71-yard TD run early in the fourth quarter.

Early and Often

Ohio State came up a yard short on its first possession from the 25 and punted to the Hoosiers, who quickly went three-and-out with the temperature at 39 degrees with flurries for the noon start.

The Buckeyes then went 65 yards in 2:19 with three big runs at the start of the six-play drive for a 7-0 lead. Williams had consecutive carries of 10 and 32 yards to the 23, and Marvin Harrison Jr. raced 18 yards on



SONNY BROCKWAY

DIPPING AND DIVING – Ohio State's Swiss army knife – also known as Xavier Johnson (10) – provided one of the game's highlights, swerving through the Indiana defense for a 71-yard rushing touchdown.

an end-around to the 5. Stroud lost a yard on a rollout to the left and was incomplete to Harrison in the end zone on second down, but he found Emeka Egbuka for the 6-yard score on the next play.

Hayden rushed for a 14-yard TD at 4:31 of the first quarter for a 14-0 lead. Williams had runs of 7, 9, and 10 yards and Johnson took a pass in the backfield and galloped 34 yards during the series that consumed eight plays and took 3:37 to go 78 yards.

The Hoosiers punted again after totaling just 15 yards in their first three possessions, and it took nine seconds for the Buckeyes to strike again when Harrison blew by his defenders for an easy 58-yard touchdown catch on the first snap, upping the score to 21-0 at 2:37.

Indiana changed quarterbacks, replacing Connor Bazelak with Dexter Williams II, and the results were immediate. Williams ran 16 yards on the first play from the 25, and two plays later he connected with Andison Coby for 49 yards to the 10.

After a 3-yard run by Josh Henderson and an incompleting, Williams lobbed a 7-yard TD to AJ Barner, who had a six-inch height advantage over cornerback Cameron Brown, to make it 21-7 with four seconds left in the first quarter. The drive went 75 yards in six plays and 2:33.

The score after the first quarter was the same as the final the previous game at gusty Northwestern.

Miyan Williams on a third-and-1 from the Indiana 48 took the handoff and went the distance to extend the lead to 28-7 at the 10:41 mark of the second quarter. OSU used three plays and just 27 seconds to traverse 57 yards.

Late in the first half, two plays after Harrison made a spectacular grab along the right sideline at the Indiana 26, Miyan Williams was injured after a 4-yard gain with 2:17 left.

Once play resumed, Hayden gained a yard, but on fourth down needing a yard, fullback Mitch Rossi was tackled for a yard loss. Indiana reached the OSU 29, but sacks of 8 yards by Lathan Ransom and Steele Chambers and 5 yards by Ty Hamilton and

Jack Sawyer ended the half.

More Of The Same

Indiana opened the second half by marching to the OSU 23 on the strength of a 44-yard carry by Emery Simmons, but the Hoosiers were stopped on a fourth-down incompleting 2 yards shy of moving the chains.

Later, a blocked punt by Ransom set the Buckeyes up at the Indiana 2, and Stroud had a 1-yard pass to Cade Stover to make it 35-7 with 9:33 left in the third quarter. Johnson had recovered the block at the 7 and returned it 5 yards. Hayden then gained a yard before Stroud found Stover all alone on the left side for the six points.

Stover's subsequent 12-yard touchdown reception made it 42-7 at 7:38. Egbuka had a 32-yard catch to the 12 on the previous play. The drive was three plays for 52 yards in 1:15.

Johnson's long run came with 14:07 remaining in the game, but the Hoosiers were gifted a score to make it 49-14 with 12:03 to go.

OSU backup punt returner Reis Stockdale muffed his second punt of the game. The Buckeyes recovered the first but not the second, and the Hoosiers took over at the 18. They needed two plays to score, the last a 19-yard catch by Donaven McCulley.

Stroud stayed in the game and completed passes of 24 yards to Harrison and 13 yards to Johnson, as well as a 20-yard run by Hayden, to set up the pass to Babb with 8:49 remaining. In the ensuing celebration, the Buckeyes were given a delay-of-game penalty – one of just three flags on the day for OSU, all coming in the fourth quarter – but nobody cared.

Indiana had one more series and punted for the 12th time. Kyle McCord subbed for Stroud with 6:13 left and the Buckeyes ran out the clock, but not before McCord went to Jayden Ballard for 24 yards. The game ended with two McCord kneel-downs, the final at the Indiana 42.

Notes

Stroud was 17 of 28 for 297 yards. ... Harrison made seven catches for 135 yards, and Stover had two TDs among his three catches for 45 yards. ... Ohio State totaled 662 yards with 340 on the ground and 322 through the air, with 27 first downs compared to 11 for the Hoosiers. Indiana gained 269 yards (150 rushing, 119 passing). ... Dexter Williams was 6 for 19 for 107 yards with two TDs. He led the team with 46 yards on 16 carries. ... OSU had four sacks for 29 yards. Ransom and Jack Sawyer each had 1½. ... Steele Chambers topped the Buckeyes with 10 tackles (five solo). ... Ohio State has won 28 straight games (one vacated) over Indiana.

www.HatemAutomotive.com
service@hatemservice.com
 1407 West Fifth Avenue
 Columbus, OH 43212
614-486-5277

Tom Hatem Automotive
Serving all of Columbus' automotive repair needs for over 23 years.
BMW • MERCEDES • MINI COOPER • PORSCHE

chocolate café
 FINE CHOCOLATES • COFFEES • DESSERTS • SPIRITS & PEOPLE

1855 Northwest Boulevard
 (614) 485-CAFE
 chocolatecafecolumbus.com

Parties • Corporate Catering
 Weddings • Baby & Bridal Showers • Tailgates

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 56, Indiana 14

Nov. 12, 2022 - Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
INDIANA	7	0	0	7	14
OHIO STATE	21	7	14	14	56

First Quarter

- OSU** - Egbuka, 6-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 9:42.
- OSU** - Hayden, 14-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 4:31.
- OSU** - Harrison Jr., 58-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 2:37.
- IND** - Barner, 7-yard pass from Williams II (Campbell kick), 0:04.

Second Quarter

- OSU** - M. Williams, 48-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 10:41.

Third Quarter

- OSU** - Stover, 1-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 9:33.
- OSU** - Stover, 12-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 7:38.

Fourth Quarter

- OSU** - Johnson, 71-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 14:07.
- IND** - McCulley, 19-yard pass from Williams II (Campbell kick), 12:03.
- OSU** - Babb, 8-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 8:49.

Att. - 103,888

Weather - Snow, 39 F

Team Statistics

	IND	OSU
First Downs	11	27
Rushing	7	12
Passing	4	14
Penalty	0	1
Rushes-Yards	40-150	43-340
Passing Yards	119	322
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	9-24-0	19-30-0
Offensive Plays	64	73
Total Net Yards	269	662
Third Down Efficiency	3-17	7-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	0-1
Punts-Avg.	12-41.7	5-40.4
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-1
Penalties	2-20	3-15
Time of Possession	26:41	33:19

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) - IND: Williams II 16-46; Simmons 1-44; Henderson 7-25; Shivers 8-20; Lucas 6-17; Bazalak 2-(-2). **OSU:** M. Williams 15-147; Hayden 19-102; X. Johnson 1-71; Harrison Jr. 1-18; Stroud 4-8; Rossi 1-(-1); Team 2-(-5).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) - IND: Williams II 6-19-0-107-2; Bazalak 3-5-0-12-0. **OSU:** Stroud 17-28-0-297-5; McCord 2-2-0-25-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) - IND: Barner 4-8; Coby 1-49; Holt-Bennett 1-28; McCulley 1-19; Simmons 1-9; Lucas 1-6. **OSU:** Harrison Jr. 7-135; Stover 3-45; X. Johnson 2-47; Egbuka 2-38; Fleming 2-24; Ballard 1-24; Babb 1-8; Royer 1-1.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) - IND: Evans 11-45.5-53; Team 1-0-0. **OSU:** Mirco 5-40.4-47.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) - IND: Delp 1-(-2). **OSU:** Egbuka 2-(-2); Ransom 1-23; Stocksdale 2-(-1).

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) - IND: Lucas 4-82. **OSU:** X. Johnson 2-51.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) - IND: Bonds 1-0. **OSU:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) - IND: None. **OSU:** None.

SACKS - IND: None. **OSU:** Ransom 1.5-11; Sawyer 1.5-11; Chambers 0.5-4; Hamilton 0.5-3.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) - IND: Matthews 1-3; Casey 1-1; McCullough 1-1; Elliott 0.5-1; Bryant 0.5-0. **OSU:** Eichenberg 3-4; Ransom 1.5-11; Sawyer 1.5-11; Chambers 1-5; Hickman 1-2; Hamilton 0.5-3; C. Brown 0.5-1; Simon 0.5-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst-Tot.) - IND: Casey 6-4-10; Fitzgerald 3-4-7; Matthews 4-1-5; McCullough 4-0-4; Bonds 3-1-4; Jennings Jr. 2-2-4; Mullen 2-2-4; Elliott 1-3-4; Williams 2-1-3; Haynes 2-1-3; Watley-Neely 2-1-3; Turner 0-3-3; Pierre 2-0-2; Sanguinetti 2-0-2; Hohlt 1-1-2; Dunnam 0-2-2; Jones 0-2-2; Head Jr. 1-0-1; Barnes 1-0-1; Jones 1-0-1; Bryant 0-1-1; McCulley 0-1-1; Grier 0-1-1; Jackson 0-1-1. **OSU:** Chambers 5-5-10; Ransom 7-2-9; Eichenberg 4-3-7; Vincent 1-3-4; Harrison 1-3-4; Simon 1-3-4; T. Williams 1-3-4; Tuimoloau 1-2-3; Sawyer 1-2-3; Stokes 0-3-3; Hancock 2-0-2; Hickman 1-1-2; Proctor 0-2-2; Hamilton 0-2-2; McCalister 1-0-1; Fielding 1-0-1; Styles 1-0-1; Cage 1-0-1; Ballard 0-1-1; C. Brown 0-1-1; J. Brown 0-1-1; Friday 0-1-1; Martinez 0-1-1; Gaoteote IV 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME - IND: Simmons, Holt-Bennett, Shivers, Bomba, Carpenter, Hanna, Katic, Benson, Haggard, Barner, Bazalak, Matthews, Pierre, Williams, Mullen, Fitzgerald, Casey, Jennings Jr., Nofoagato'o'a, Head Jr., Bryant, Elliott, McCullough, McCulley, Jackson, Coby, Watley-Neely, Lucas, Turner, Dunnam, Grier, Haynes, Swinton, Sanguinetti, Moore, Bonds, Henderson, Howland, Speagal, Barnes, Robbins, Hohlt, Jones, Tevis, Williams II, Lucas Jr., Fiacable, Sneed, Murphy, Davis, Knight, Smith, Keys, Freeman, Delp, Harris, Steinfeldt, Lanier, Cox, Campbell, Evans, Wracher, Jones. **OSU:** Harrison Jr., Egbuka, M. Williams, Fleming, Wypler, M. Jones, Stroud, Fryar, Jackson, Johnson Jr., Stover, Ransom, Hickman, McCalister, Chambers, C. Brown, Eichenberg, Tuimoloau, Hamilton, Vincent, Hancock, Harrison, Babb, X. Johnson, Hicks, Martinez, Antwi, J. Brown, Styles, Gaoteote IV, Mirco, Simon, Sawyer, Rossi, Stokes, Fielding, J. Johnson, Proctor, Myers, Hayden, Kuwatch, Hall Jr., Friday, McCord, Michalski, Vimahi, Fitzpatrick, James, Jean-Baptiste, Hart, Royer, Christian, Cage, Stocksdale, Scott Jr., Ballard, T. Williams, Curry, Arnold, Ruggles.

Season Statistics

2022 Game-By-Game

Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Sept. 3	(2) NOTRE DAME (5)	W, 21-10	106,549
Sept. 10	(3) ARKANSAS STATE	W, 45-12	100,067
Sept. 17	(3) TOLEDO	W, 77-21	105,398
Sept. 24	(3) WISCONSIN	W, 52-21	105,473
Oct. 1	(3) RUTGERS	W, 49-10	104,245
Oct. 8	(3) at Michigan State	W, 49-20	72,809
Oct. 22	(2) IOWA	W, 54-10	104,848
Oct. 29	(2) at Penn State (13)	W, 44-31	108,433
Nov. 5	(2) at Northwestern	W, 21-7	42,774
Nov. 12	(2) INDIANA	W, 56-14	103,888
Nov. 19	at Maryland	3:30 p.m.	
Nov. 26	MICHIGAN (3)	Noon	
Dec. 3	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.	

OSU's gameday AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	237	135
Rushing	92	54
Passing	127	68
Penalty	18	13
Average Per Game/Rush	207.9	110.3
Average Per Game/Pass	294.0	161.2
Total Offense	5019	2715
Total Plays	660	619
Average Per Game	501.9	271.5
Average Per Play	7.6	4.4
Penalties-Yards	49-412	51-418
Fumbles-Lost	8-4	14-7
Third Down Efficiency	58-123	41-147
Percentage	47%	28%
Fourth Down Efficiency	12-15	6-22
Percentage	80%	27%
Sacks-Yards	26-158	7-38
Time Of Possession Avg.	30:30	29:29

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	145	96	122	105	0	468	46.8
Opponents	48	50	13	45	0	156	15.6

Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Miyan Williams	117	783	6.7	13	70
T. Henderson	96	552	5.8	6	41
Dallan Hayden	73	357	4.9	2	45
Xavier Johnson	4	94	23.5	1	71
C.J. Stroud	29	83	2.9	0	44
Emeka Egbuka	8	80	10.0	2	27
TC Caffey	10	66	6.6	1	49
M. Harrison Jr.	2	32	16.0	0	18
Jesse Mirco	1	22	22.0	0	22
Mitch Rossi	5	12	2.4	1	8
Chip Trayanum	1	9	9.0	0	9
Cayden Saunders	2	6	3.0	0	5
Kyle McCord	3	4	1.3	0	3
Devin Brown	1	1	1.0	0	1
Team	10	-22	-2.2	0	0
OSU Totals	362	2198	5.7	26	71
OPP Totals	355	1371	3.1	6	75

Passing

	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
C.J. Stroud	186	277	67.1	2750	34-4	188.2
Kyle McCord	16	20	80.0	190	1-0	176.3
Team	0	1	0.0	0	0-0	0.0
OSU Totals	202	298	67.8	2940	35-4	186.7
OPP Totals	149	264	56.4	1612	11-10	113.9

Receiving

	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Marvin Harrison Jr.	60	969	16.2	11	58
Emeka Egbuka	51	832	16.3	8	69
Cade Stover	29	366	12.6	5	38
Julian Fleming	22	385	17.5	6	79
Jayden Ballard	8	155	19.4	1	72
Xavier Johnson	7	95	13.6	1	34
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	5	43	8.6	0	21
Miyan Williams	4	26	6.5	0	12
Gee Scott Jr.	4	12	3.0	1	4
T. Henderson	3	-3	-1.0	0	4
Dallan Hayden	2	13	6.5	0	10
Mitch Rossi	2	19	9.5	1	16
Joe Royer	1	1	1.0	0	12
Reis Stocksdale	1	12	12.0	0	12
Kamryn Babb	1	8	8.0	1	8
Kaleb Brown	1	5	5.0	0	5
Kyion Grayes	1	2	2.0	0	2
OSU Totals	202	2940	14.6	35	79
OPP Totals	149	1612	10.8	11	58

Scoring

	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Noah Ruggles	-	63-63	-	-	9-11	90

Miyan Williams	13	-	-	-	-	78
M. Harrison Jr.	11	-	-	-	-	66
Emeka Egbuka	10	-	-	-	-	60
Julian Fleming	6	-	-	-	-	36
T. Henderson	6	-	-	-	-	36
Cade Stover	5	-	-	-	-	30
Mitch Rossi	2	-	-	-	-	12
Xavier Johnson	2	-	-	-	-	12
Dallan Hayden	2	-	-	-	-	12
T. Eichenberg	1	-	-	-	-	6
Kamryn Babb	1	-	-	-	-	6
Gee Scott Jr.	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jayden Ballard	1	-	-	-	-	6
J.T. Tuimoloau	1	-	-	-	-	6
TC Caffey	1	-	-	-	-	6

OSU Totals	63	63-63	-	-	-	9-11	468
OPP Totals	19	18-19	0-0	0-0	8-8	156	

FG Distance

	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Noah Ruggles	3-3	3-4	3-3	0-1	9-11
OSU Totals	3-3	3-4	3-3	0-1	9-11
OPP Totals	1-1	4-4	3-3	0-0	8-8

Punting

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Jesse Mirco	36	1653	45.9	0	77
M. O'Shaughnessy	1	41	41.0	0	41
OSU Totals	37	1694	45.8	0	77
OPP Totals	63	2770	44.0	0	75

Interceptions

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Tanner McCalister	3	41	13.7	0	30
J.T. Tuimoloau	2	16	8.0	1	14
Tommy Eichenberg	1	15	15.0	1	15
Zach Harrison	1	2	2.0	0	2
Steele Chambers	1	12	12.0	0	12
Ronnie Hickman	1	8	8.0	0	8
Lathan Ransom	1	0	0	0	0
OSU Totals	10	94	9.4	2	30
OPP Totals	4	47	11.8	1	32

Punt Returns

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	11	75	6.8	0	18
Jayden Ballard	1	14	14.0	0	14
JK Johnson	1	0	0.0	0	0
Reis Stocksdale	2	-1	-0.5	0	0
OSU Totals	15	93	6.2	0	18
OPP Totals	6	35	5.8	0	15

Kickoff Returns

||
||
||

Tagovailoa Raising Standard At Maryland

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

This game has been a long time coming for Maryland, which played consecutive games at Ohio State in 2019 and 2021 due to the pandemic shuffling the conference schedule and eliminating a previously scheduled game at College Park, Md., in 2020. With the Buckeyes having to finally hit the road, the Terrapins are hoping this upcoming matchup at home is reminiscent of their most recent hosting of the Buckeyes in 2018 rather than the road games sandwiched in between.

It was that game in 2018 – a 52-51 win in overtime for Ohio State, in which it was favored by two touchdowns, one that came down to a failed two-point conversion – that still has Ohio State fans checking under their beds for Anthony McFarland, the Terrapin running back who finished with 298 rushing yards on 21 carries, including a pair of long touchdown runs (81 and 75 yards) in the first six minutes of the game.

McFarland reached 100 rushing yards in only two more games during his Maryland career, the sign of a result more telling of the Buckeyes' struggling defense than it was a dominant outing by McFarland. That game led to wholesale changes at Ohio State, ones that were further expedited when Urban Meyer later stepped down as head coach following the season's conclusion. Ohio State, much like Maryland, is a program in a much different spot now than it was four seasons ago.

The Terrapins are now led by head coach Mike Locksley, who is in his fourth season as the lead man for Maryland. His team finished 3-9 in 2019 and suffered through the pandemic-shortened season with a 2-3 record before finally breaking through last year, finishing with a 7-6 record capped off by a dominant 54-10 win in the Pinstripe Bowl over Virginia Tech, the school's first bowl win since joining the Big Ten in 2014.

The hounding of the Hokies – and the general turnaround of the team – was led in part by quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa, who finished 20 of 24 passing for 265 yards and a pair of touchdowns. The Alabama transfer had initially joined the team prior to the 2020 season but was unable to find a groove playing in just four games.

This past season, though, he took the next step. He completed 69.2 percent of his passes for 3,860 passing yards and 26 touchdowns compared to 11 interceptions, with the former three marks all either tying or breaking a school record.

"I hope it quiets some of the critics and he gets some of the respect he deserves as a quarterback," Locksley said after the bowl win. "We wouldn't be in this situation we're

in with a winning season without Taulia."

Tagovailoa has mostly picked up where he left off last season, well on his way to becoming the most decorated quarterback in program history. This has helped lead the Terrapins to a 6-4 record this season, bowl eligible in consecutive seasons for the first time since 2013-14 under former head coach Randy Edsall.

Through nine games this season, Tagovailoa has completed 68.3 percent of his passes for 2,152 yards and 14 touchdowns (six interceptions).

While his numbers were solid through the first months of the season, he's struggled of late. After being carted off late with a knee injury in Maryland's 38-33 win at Indiana on Oct. 15 – later determined to be a sprained MCL – he missed the next game against Northwestern, and in his return at Wisconsin on Nov. 5, he completed just 10 of his 23 passing attempts for 77 yards and an interception in a 23-10 loss. Against Penn State the following week, he finished just 11 of 22 for 74 yards, though it wasn't a strong showing for any Terrapin as they fell 30-0 on the road. In short, the catalyst for Maryland's recent success may not be 100 percent when Ohio State visits on Nov. 19.

"It's mostly trying to get him back into conditioning, limiting how much we do with him early in the week to see how his body continues to respond," Locksley said prior to the Wisconsin game. "But the expectation is that 'Lia should be back and as close to 100 percent like he was prior to the Indiana game."

And while Tagovailoa's status impacts the ceiling for Maryland's season, it isn't a one-man show for the Terrapins. They've found success in the running game with Roman Hemby, who has rushed for 815 yards on 134 carries this year, good for 6.1 yards per attempt, to go with seven rushing touchdowns. While Antwaine Littleton has seen significantly fewer carries – just 62 for 331 yards – he's found the end zone almost as much as Hemby, scoring six times on the ground.

Maryland also puts on the field one of the Big Ten's best receiving corps, which features six receivers with at least 22 receptions and 250 receiving yards on the year. Rakim Jarrett leads the bunch with 37 catches for 406 yards and a trio of scores. Even with Tagovailoa's absence against the Wildcats, Maryland still put up 423 total yards of offense in the 31-24 win, which is 140 more yards than Ohio State gained against Northwestern, albeit in better weather conditions.

"We have a lot of talented players on our offense," Locksley said. "I think the diversity that we've created with our tight ends, our backs, our receivers, typically make it a tough deal to defend because you don't know where the ball is going."

Get To Know ... Maryland

2022 Record: 6-4.

Team Information: Offensive Formation - Spread; Defensive Formation - 4-3; Starters Returning - Offense 9, Defense 7, Specialists 2.

Head Coach: Mike Locksley, 5th year at Maryland, 19-27

Series History: 8th meeting; Ohio State leads 7-0-0

School Facts: Location - College Park, Md.; Enrollment - 40,521; Nickname - Terrapins; Colors - Red, Yellow; Conference - Big Ten (East Division); Stadium - SECU Stadium (Surface - FieldTurf; Capacity - 51,802).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Roman Hemby	134	815	6.1	7
Antwain Littleton II	62	338	5.5	6

Passing	Comp-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Taulia Tagovailoa	192-281	68.3	2152	14-6
Billy Edwards Jr.	27-45	60.0	268	3-0

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Rakim Jarrett	37	396	10.7	3
Corey Dyches	29	386	13.3	3
Jeshaun Jones	28	313	11.2	2

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game	— 28.3
Rushing Yards Per Game	— 154.3
Passing Yards Per Game	— 242.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game	— 396.3

2022 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Sept. 3	BUFFALO	W, 31-10
Sept. 10	at Charlotte	W, 56-21
Sept. 17	SMU	W, 34-27
Sept. 24	at Michigan	L, 34-27
Oct. 1	MICHIGAN STATE	W, 27-13
Oct. 8	PURDUE	L, 31-29
Oct. 15	at Indiana	W, 38-33
Oct. 22	NORTHWESTERN	W, 31-24
Nov. 5	at Wisconsin	L, 23-10
Nov. 12	at Penn State	L, 30-0
Nov. 19	OHIO STATE	3:30 p.m.
Nov. 26	RUTGERS	TBA
Dec. 3	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yards	Sacks
Beau Brade	41	26	67	3.0-5	0-0
Ahmad McCullough	28	15	43	2.0-8	0-0
Jaishawn Barham	26	16	42	4.5-20	3.0-18
Dante Trader Jr.	27	22	49	0.5-1	0-0
Jakorian Bennett	21	13	36	1.5-3	0-0
Tarheeb Still	28	9	37	3.0-21	0-0

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
Beau Brade	2	13	6.5	0
Dante Trader Jr.	2	46	23.0	0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed	— 24.6
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed	— 148.9
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed	— 232.1
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed	— 381.0

The defense has been less consistent for Maryland, allowing 24.6 points and 381.0 total yards per game. It's possible these issues are due in part to preparation, as the Terrapins have allowed 166 points in the first half compared to just 80 points in the second half this season. The idea of a "second-half team" is one often said in jest to excuse an unsightly first-half performance, but it's a concept that Locksley has leaned into.

"We've played better defense in the second half," Locksley said. "Once we get an idea of how they are attacking us, we (get) things adjusted at halftime and make the necessary corrections."

Linebacker Ruben Hyppolite II said execution and mental focus are other factors contributing to the slow starts on defense.

"I think that's one thing that we just have to lock in on consistently and just continue to hammer within practice," he said. "Our defensive coordinator, Coach (Brian) Williams, he continues to preach that to us, so it's just been the focus level as far as scheming."

Most of Maryland's production lies within the secondary. Five of the Terrapins' defensive backs – Deonte Banks, Jakorian Bennett, Beau Brade, Tarheeb Still and Dante Trader Jr. – are among the top seven tacklers on the team, and each has at least one interception this year, led by Brade and Trader with two each.

Bennett has a team-high nine pass breakups on the year, followed by Banks' six and Brade's five, but the group as a whole is allowing 232.1 passing yards per game, 76th nationally and 10th in the Big Ten. Maryland's passing touchdowns allowed – 16 through 10 games – are the 10th most in the conference.

The rushing defense has not fared much better, giving up 148.9 yards per game and

4.0 yards per attempt. In their loss to Wisconsin, the Terrapins gave up 278 rushing yards on 46 carries (6.0 yards per tote). The unit was able to hold Purdue to just 13 rushing yards on 34 carries in a 31-29 loss earlier in the season, but it came at the expense of the passing defense, which allowed the Boilermakers' Aidan O'Connell to complete 73.2 percent of his passes (30 of 41) for 360 yards and a pair of touchdowns. The Nittany Lions rushed for 249 on 43 attempts in their recent meeting.

Linebackers Jaishawn Barham (three sacks), VanDarius Cowan (1½ tackles for loss, forced fumble) and Hyppolite (13 tackles) man the middle of the field for Maryland, with Fa'Najae Gotay and Ahmad McCullough – who have combined for 72 tackles – serving as capable backups. Defensive end Durrell Nchami leads the way in the trenches, accounting for three sacks and six tackles for loss. Ami Finau and Mosiah Nasili-Kite have the Terrapins' interior locked down, while Greg China-Rose operates out of Maryland's "Jack" position.

Continued improvement on the defensive side of the ball is pivotal given the strides by Maryland's offense, and more week-to-week consistency could lead to the Terrapins competing for bowl eligibility on an annual basis, with the opportunity for even more as Locksley's program continues to build.

"I can tell you as a whole, because of the culture that's been created down in that locker room, our guys are playing hard," Locksley said. "We've still got a lot of room to grow, and to me, we're chasing it. We're trying to chase that ability to play the perfect game, and we're still a little further away than we want to be. But you know what, we'll continue to work to get there."

I will wait for YOU

I'll be your Home Concierge whenever you have a furniture or appliance delivery, service call, or other important event that requires someone to be in your home.

Pet Friendly. Insured.

Nancy Magargal • 614.208.5702 • illwaitforyou5nancy@gmail.com



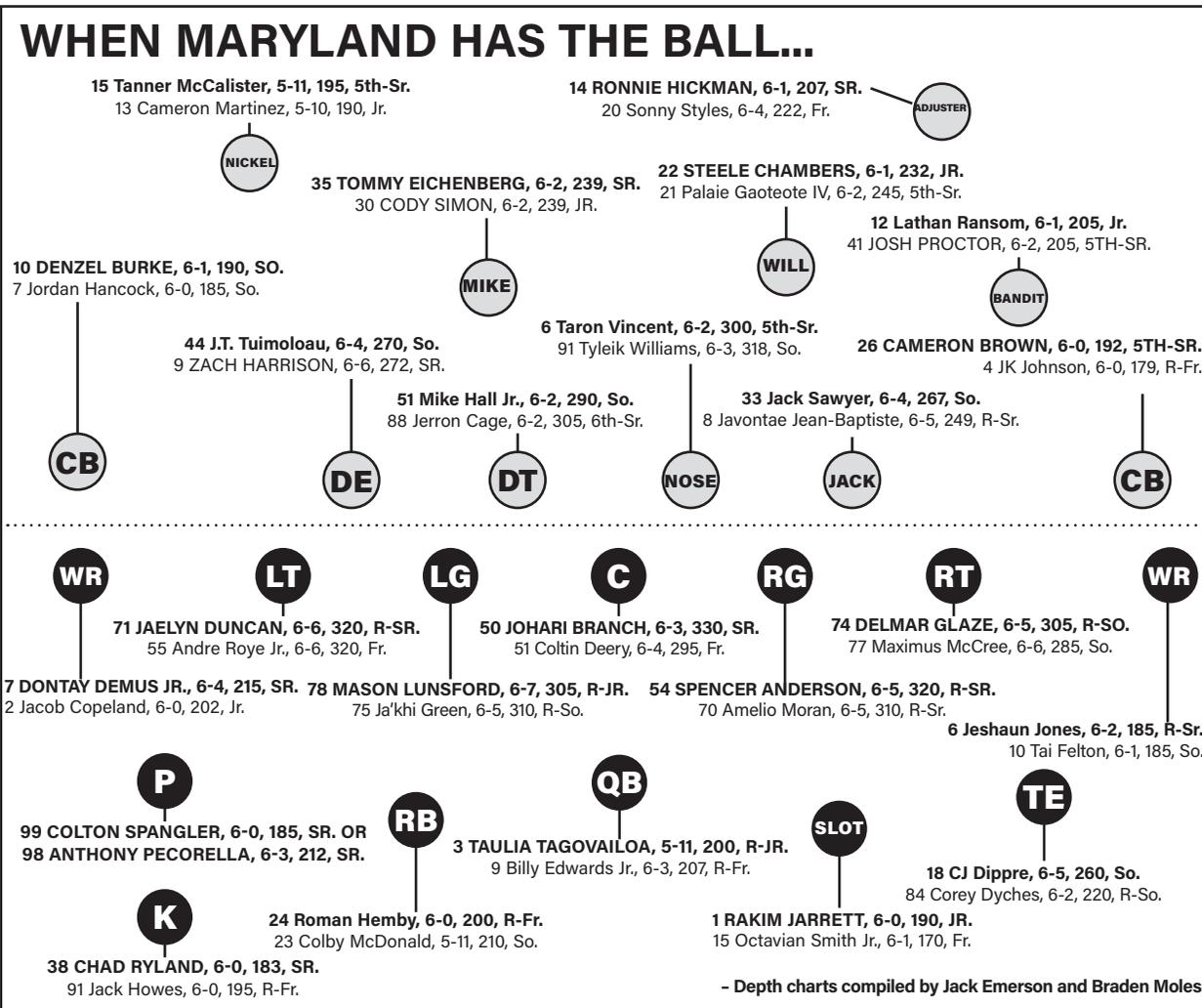
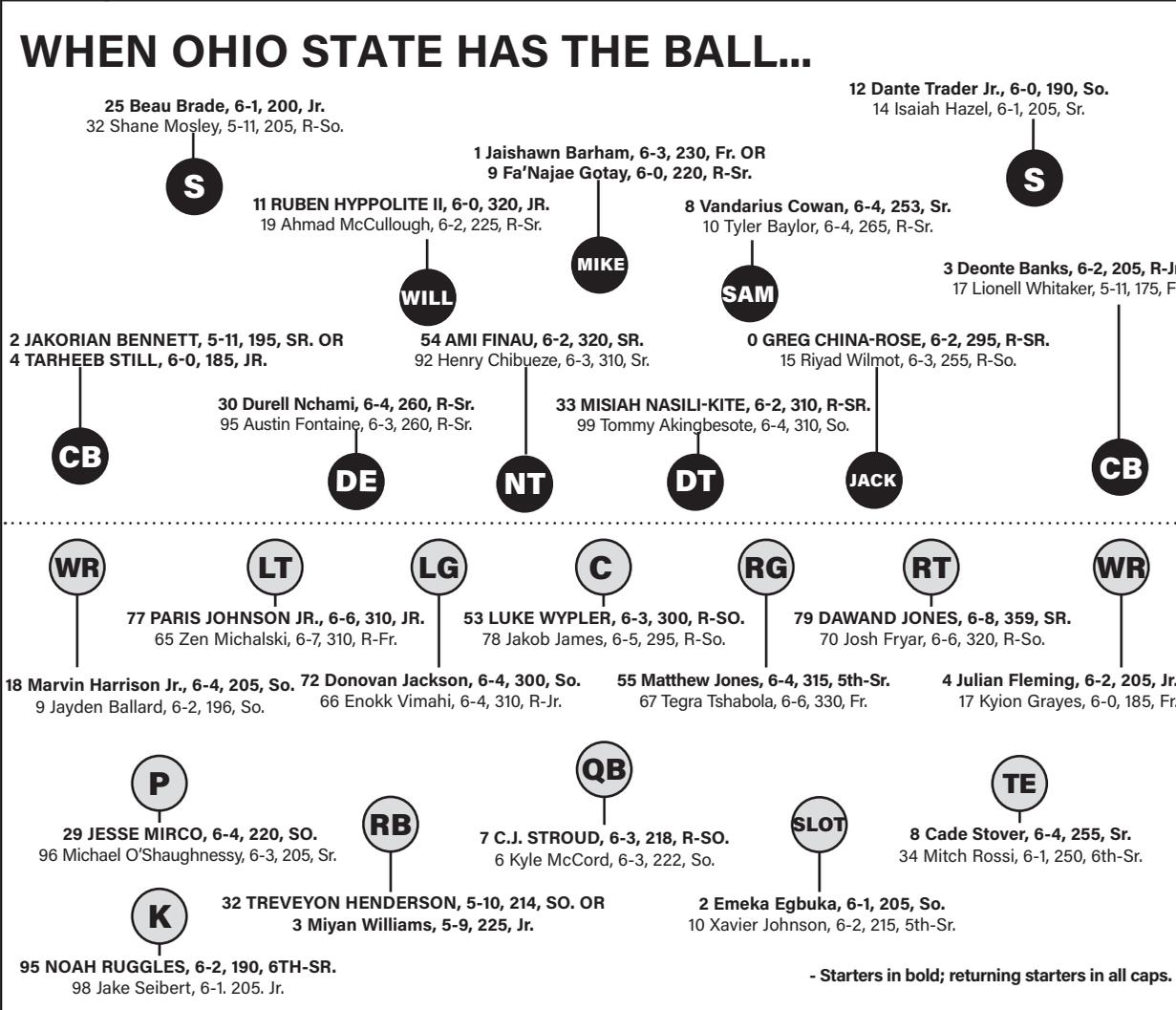


Ohio State at Maryland

Saturday, Nov. 19 • 3:30 • ABC
SECU Stadium, College Park, Md.



Projected Depth Charts



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. MARYLAND RUSH DEFENSE

It's both amazing and bizarre that the Buckeye rushing attack could post 340 yards on 7.9 yard per carry and score three touchdowns on the ground yet be a major source of concern following the 56-14 thrashing of Indiana. The major worries, of course, surround the health of the top backs, TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams. Henderson was unavailable for the game, and Williams hurt his right leg in the second quarter and was done for the day after rushing for 147 yards, including a touchdown. Dallon Hayden filled in nicely with 102 yards on 19 carries (5.4), and receiver/utility player Xavier Johnson had an electrifying 71-yard TD on his lone run. The 340 yards were the most for the Buckeyes since rushing for 399 against Northwestern in the Big Ten Championship Game in 2020. The other downer was that the short-yardage failures continue to be a plague that somehow could turn coach Ryan Day's hair and beard gray. The Buckeyes can get away with it against the likes of Northwestern, Indiana and Maryland, but try that against Michigan and the results could be different. Maryland is 69th against the run nationally (148.9 yards per game) with 13 touchdowns allowed. Penn State ran for 249 yards in a 30-0 win over the Terps on Nov. 12. By the way, the Nittany Lions played without three starting offensive linemen. Also, Wisconsin rushed for 278 yards vs. Maryland the previous game. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

MARYLAND RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

Ohio State knows how difficult it is to run against Penn State (98 yards, 3.8 per carry) so it was no surprise that the Terrapins were stymied. The Terps netted 60 yards on 37 carries (1.6) against the Nittany Lions, although the total was lowered because quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa was sacked seven times for 49 yards. Maryland's top rusher was Roman Hemby with 68 yards on 13 carries for a respectable 5.2 average. The Terrapins are 65th in rushing (154.3) while the Buckeyes rank 18th in run defense (110.3). The Buckeyes yielded 150 yards (3.8) to Indiana. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. MARYLAND PASS DEFENSE

Quarterback C.J. Stroud had some impressive numbers against Indiana, throwing for 297 yards and five touchdowns, but he is still not in Heisman-like form with his numbers padded by remaining in the game well into the fourth quarter. He opened the game with two passes that netted 8 yards and was 4 of 10 in the second quarter. With Jaxon Smith-Njigba out – and who knows if he will return – Marvin Harrison Jr. continues to be The Man with seven catches for 135 yards and a 58-yard touchdown. Tight end Cade Stover is invaluable – three receptions for 45 yards and two scores – because teams will concentrate on Harrison if the other receivers don't step up. Emeka Egbuka was targeted three times and made two catches for 38 yards, but Julian Fleming had another drop on a surefire touchdown. He had two catches for 24 yards among five targets. The X factor is Johnson, who had two catches for 47 yards. Maryland is 76th in the country in pass defense yielding 232.1 yards per game. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

MARYLAND PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

This game was expected to be a needed test for the OSU secondary before the final exam against Michigan. It may well be, but not if Tagovailoa continues his downward spiral. The Terrapins had 134 total yards (27 in the first half) vs. Penn State in large part because he was harassed the entire game. He entered averaging 259.8 yards per game but passed for a career-low 74 yards, completing 11 of 22 with a long of 21. He had just 77 yards the week before against Wisconsin. OSU is sixth nationally against the pass, giving up 161.2 yards per game with 11 touchdowns allowed and 10 interceptions. The Terps will have to contend with safety Lathan Ransom, who had nine tackles (seven solo), 1½ sacks, one pass breakup and a blocked punt vs. Indiana. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Ransom's blocked punt was already mentioned so that's a plus. A mini-negative was backup punt returner Reis Stockdale muffing two punts, losing one, but he won't be used while the game is in doubt as long as Egbuka is healthy. Maryland's Colton Spangler had punts of 53 and 59 yards against Penn State, giving him 11 of 50-plus this season. **EDGE: EVEN**

INTANGIBLES

Maryland is like that blind date that has a "good personality." The Terrapins rank in the 60s and 70s out of 131 schools in most major categories. They're not that bad, not that good – a respectable team. Of note, they've outscored opponents 54-16 in the third quarter this season. However, Maryland has not scored in the first half in two successive games. That's a recipe for disaster. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

STAFF PREDICTION

Maryland is more capable of pulling an upset than either Northwestern or Indiana and will rely on memories of 2018 when the heavy underdogs lost 52-51 in overtime to the visiting Buckeyes. The Terrapins' best hope is that OSU has zero running backs available, a blizzard arrives and the Buckeyes are looking ahead a week. **OHIO STATE 49, MARYLAND 21**

OSU Run Game Showing Jekyll And Hyde

By **ANDY ANDERS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The comparison of Ohio State's running game to the famed Robert Louis Stevenson novella "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" almost writes itself. Stevenson's work is meant as an allegory, after all, even if American football was in its infancy during his time.

Prior to their off week, the Buckeyes' run game was like the reputable Dr. Jekyll. Through six games, Ohio State averaged 6.0 yards per carry on the ground and 228.0 per contest. Running backs TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams were both stacking most of those statistics in step with one another, including the Buckeyes' win over Wisconsin on Sept. 24 in which both rushed for over 100 yards.

Since then, Ohio State's rushing attack has turned into an abomination for extended periods of time. It gained a paltry 66 yards on 30 carries against Iowa. Henderson averaged 2.1 yards per carry as the squad's feature back in his first 11 carries against Penn State until busting out a 41-yard scoring jaunt in the fourth quarter. The Buckeyes lacked consistency against Northwestern, picking up just 26 yards on 10 carries in the first quarter of the contest and sputtering on offense overall with just a touchdown on the board in the first half.

"Going back and watching the film," Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said Nov. 8. "We've got to block better; we've got to run better; we've got to do a better job equating numbers, all of the above. Certainly in games where they know you're going to run it, you have to come up with answers. But just moving forward in general, we know we can do a better job."

Against Indiana the Buckeyes were again Dr. Jekyll on the ground, rushing for a season-high 340 yards at a clip of 7.9 yards per carry. Two of their backs surpassed the 100 yard mark.

Those who have read Stevenson's mag-



SONNY BROCKWAY

GET BACK SOON — Ohio State is hoping to return running back TreVeyon Henderson (32) sooner rather than later, as the sophomore has missed the Buckeyes' last two games.

num tale know that Jekyll couldn't stop from transforming into Hyde by the end, and it was his downfall. If the Buckeyes can't reforge some balance on offense, it could be theirs, too.

"Day has said it — you control the game a little bit when you can run the ball," said Marcus Hartman, who covers Ohio State football for the Dayton Daily News. "It makes you better as a play caller. Michigan is a team that is OK with you running the ball some, but so was Penn State, and they didn't run it (well) against Penn State.

"They're going to get some good run looks that they need to take advantage of. And I'm not completely sure after the last three weeks that will happen."

Hartman was one of four Ohio State football reporters BSB spoke to regarding what has created the Buckeyes' run-game struggles in the second half of the season, joining 247Sports' Steve Helwage, Rivals' Bill Landis and Eleven Warriors' Griffin Strom. All share a similar view to Day on the matter — it's not one issue, but a combination of shortcomings that can vary from play to play.

"I don't think it's one thing, which probably makes it more frustrating," Landis said. "Sometimes it feels like a miscue up front. Sometimes it feels like the running backs are not reading the hole correctly. Sometimes it feels like the play call could be better. I think that makes it hard to find the answers."

"I think there are a lot of issues," Helwage said. "I don't think you can just point to one thing. On different plays there are different things. I think for the most part this season they've been pretty predictable. They run the run-pass option plays and the zone reads, but the quarterback has rarely, if ever, kept it. And because of that I think teams have been able to tee off on the running backs and really key on them."

Some degree of the issues have been beyond Ohio State's control, and that's the health of Henderson and Williams. Henderson missed the Buckeyes' games against Rutgers, Northwestern and Indiana, leaving two other contests early (Toledo and Michigan State) with different ailments. Williams wasn't available against Michigan State and then ran the ball just twice vs. Penn State before missing the rest of that game as well. After gouging Indiana for 147 yards on 15 carries Nov. 12, Williams suffered a lower-body injury in the second quarter and was helped off the field before being carted to the locker room.

"Certainly you have to look at the health issues with the running backs because TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams have both missed parts or all of multiple games this season," Strom said. "So those guys not being at 100 percent has hurt them. Then again, you have to deal with that every year."

That's not an excuse for Ohio State's head honcho, however.

"There's going to be conditions, there's going to be injuries, bumps and bruises," Day said. "At the end of the day, we've got to go out there and produce. That's the bottom line."

Given some of the lingering health concerns that have plagued Williams and Henderson, there's talk Ohio State should give more touches to freshman Dallan Hayden or Chip Trayanum — who has made appearances at linebacker, running back and even kick-off returner this season — especially against lesser opponents. Hayden saw significant time against Indiana, especially after Williams' exit, picking up 102 yards on 19 carries and scoring a touchdown.

"You've got two running backs who are both banged up — I would have liked Dallan Hayden to have played some against Northwestern just to change things up a little bit," Helwage said. "It just seems to me like Miyan Williams just was not in a flow or able (to run his best) after being injured against Penn State."

There's been a dip in the extra yardage both starting backs are generating, too. According to Pro Football Focus, Williams averaged at least of 4.2 yards after contact per rush in each of his first five contests this season. Against Iowa, Penn State and Northwestern, however, he averaged 1.2, 2.5 and 3.0 yards after contact, respectively. Henderson averaged a mere 2.0 and 1.8 yards after contact against the Hawkeyes and Nittany Lions, his two lowest marks of the season.

"I thought Williams really struggled in

WHY THE SHEETZ NOT

BUTT DIAL A BURGER?

DOWNLOAD THE APP & GET GREAT OFFERZ & REWARDZ

SHEETZ



SONNY BROCKWAY

CHOP BLOCKED — Ohio State running back Miyan Williams' (3) day came to a premature end after he exited in the second quarter due to a right leg injury. He left the field with 147 rushing yards on 15 carries.

the first half (against Northwestern)," Hartman said. "There was a power play that he should have cut back. I think there was one he bounced (outside) that he shouldn't have bounced. There were a couple where, honestly, at this point, at this level, he needs to break one tackle. Maybe that's a high standard, but it's realistic. Break one tackle, fall forward for 1 yard."

Hartman feels as though the split in carries is part of the issue as well. It reminded him of seasons like 2018, in which running backs J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber averaged 4.6 and 5.5 yards per carry, respectively. As the leading back, however, Dobbins averaged 7.2 yards in 2017 and 6.7 yards in 2019.

"(Running backs coach Tony Alford) has been saying every year for like six years that it doesn't bother guys if they share carries, but there's literally all evidence to the contrary that it does," Hartman said. "In the games where they've each had their own game, they've both played well. This was another reason why you figure, 'Oh, if it's just Williams, he'll hunker down, he'll play well.' So maybe he was a little banged up (against the Wildcats)."

Ahead of the running backs, perhaps the most important unit when it comes to running the football is the offensive line. That's where multiple reporters suggested they've seen the most lapses on inefficient runs the past few weeks, as some blockers aren't getting low enough to leverage defensive linemen and surge forward.

"I think pad level can be an issue at times, and hand placement too," Landis said. "Sometimes you watch a run play and Ohio State's offensive linemen don't have their hands inside. Then they just really get beat to the point of attack and the defensive line-

men seem to get better leverage and a better position than Ohio State's offensive linemen do."

The Buckeyes' front five has remained relatively unhindered by injuries, save for the right side of the line with guard Matthew Jones and tackle Dawand Jones. Matthew has been nursing a foot problem for a few weeks, and guard Enokk Vimahi has entered for him to run a couple of plays on occasion.

Matthew got beat inside by Penn State defensive tackle Coziah Izzard on a third-and-1 run that forced an Ohio State punt in that game, and he had a few lapses against the Wildcats as well. While Day stated on Nov. 8 that the staff intends to keep him in as part of their best five up front, there's some suggestion that it might be best to get Jones back to 100 percent in time for the rest of the season.

"If Matt Jones needs a week, I'd say give him a week," Strom said. "Those guys have been cutting their teeth, in terms of (tackle Josh) Fryar and Vimahi. Obviously Fryar is still coming back from that ACL (tear), which Ryan Day alluded to on (Nov. 8), said he's not quite back to where he was. You have to keep the cohesion on the front five, but at the same time, I don't think it would hurt much if you gave Matt Jones a full week's rest."

Dawand, meanwhile, missed Ohio State's contest against Indiana as a game-time decision, with Fryar filling in.

Short yardage has also been a struggle for Ohio State's running game since the team's off week. Northwestern stopped the Buckeyes in three short-yardage situations in the first quarter alone, including forcing back-to-back no-gain runs out of Williams on a third-and-1 and subsequent fourth-and-1 play. Center Luke Wypler stated the team has been drilling down particularly hard on such scenarios.

"I think we had three short-yardage periods today (in practice) alone," Wypler said Nov. 9. "For us, we know how big that is, and for me, when we're on the field, I always tell my guys, 'It's a money down right now.' So we've got to go get money and keep the drive alive."

That's where the pad level and physicality at the point of attack Landis referenced comes into play most. For Hartman, losing on third- or fourth-and-short means that the offensive line is simply getting overwhelmed physically on a given play.

"(Against Northwestern) was the first time I thought, 'Man, they're just really getting whipped up front,'" Hartman said. "It just didn't look good. Even in short yardage, it's not like (the Wildcats) had seven guys on the line of scrimmage on third-and-1 and fourth-and-1. They were still in their base defense. So you should still get 1 yard, even with nine guys in the box."

The final ingredient to get Ohio State's proverbial rushing kitchen cooking again is play calling. Some of the same wide-zone concepts that were gaining chunks of ground against Wisconsin weren't achieving the same effects against Iowa or Penn State.

A few predictable calls also came up against the Nittany Lions, with the Buckeyes running the ball each time they lined up in the pistol or under center. Mixing in other looks helped Ohio State finish at 5.9 yards per carry against Northwestern despite Day stating earlier in the week that he didn't believe play-calling tendencies had caused any of the team's rushing issues.

"After the Penn State game when it seemed like it was an issue, Ohio State was pretty creative and diverse in its rushing attack against Northwestern," Landis said. "They did a lot of different stuff. I think they might have only run outside zone two or three times. I do think they have tendencies. I think they're aware of them. Tendencies exist because you're good at them, or at least in the past they have been good at them."

"I'm not saying it's wrong to have tendencies, but I do feel like at times the rushing attack has gotten bogged down because of leaning too much into tendencies, and I do think the staff is aware of that, even if they don't say it publicly."

One wrinkle appeared against the Wildcats that helped open the run game later, and that was involving quarterback C.J. Stroud on the ground. He picked up 79 yards on six carries against Northwestern after entering the game with minus-4 rushing yards on the year. The downside to his increased rushing load, of course, is that it puts the squad's signal caller in harm's way.

"(The quarterback run) can be a weapon for us moving forward," Day said. "Maybe we found a little something there, but that has pluses and minuses as well. But at the end of the day, our running backs have got to run. Our O-line's got to block. The tight ends got to block. Receivers have got to be a part of it."

Wide receiver Emeka Egbuka has also gotten involved to help stretch defenses horizontally, carrying the ball eight times for 80 yards and two touchdowns on various wide receiver sweeps through Nov. 12. Day doesn't want to over-utilize the play, however.

"When you go sideways, you do run the risk of having negative plays," Day said. "We had a couple that went that way (against Northwestern). When you're in a game like that and you're in second-and-14, that's not a good place to be in with that type of environment. So we tried to stay on schedule."

Bubble screens and swing passes have been another way to stretch defenses side to side for Ohio State, and Day considers such

designs an extension of the team's running game. It's another play type that worked in contests earlier in the year, with the Buckeyes picking up multiple first downs via bubble against Wisconsin, but has been gimpy of late. Ohio State totaled 7 yards in losses on its first four bubbles and swings against Penn State.

"It forces everyone to run to that side of the field if you complete it," Day said. "It sounds crazy, but it's true. We want them to defend the entire field, and if they put a lot of guys in the box then we need to spread them out to the perimeter. We always say that we want to be able to take them inside, attack them outside and then throw the ball down the field."

This is still the same squad that pounded out 85 rushing yards in the fourth quarter against then-No. 5 Notre Dame, a team with the nation's No. 37 rushing defense (125.2 yards) through week 10, to ice away a victory in the opener and the same unit that propelled Williams to a school-record-tying five rushing touchdowns against Rutgers. That magic just needs to be recaptured.

"I think the promising thing, if there is anything promising about it, is that we've seen Ohio State be a pretty good and efficient rushing team this year," Landis said. "I think they can get it back, it's just for whatever reason, things have kind of slipped the last few weeks."

Day, Wypler and the rest of Ohio State's players and coaches will be searching for solutions to undo that slippage before Michigan comes to town on Nov. 26. No one on the team wants to see the ground game permanently stuck as Mr. Hyde.

"Everyone has to be better," Wypler said Nov. 9. "There's always one block or one thing that went wrong, and we were always one thing away. So this week is about honing in and doing your job. That's something we preach, and that's something we've just got to live by now, is just be able to do your job and do it effectively, make sure the play works."



SONNY BROCKWAY

FRESH FROSH — Ohio State running back Dallan Hayden (5) was thrust into action against Indiana after Miyan Williams' injury, and the freshman churned out 102 rushing yards on 19 carries.

'Holy Buckeye' Highlights Wild Regular Season

On the 20th anniversary of Ohio State's 2002 national championship, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* will be running occasional stories on that magical season. The following story recalls a miracle to keep the undefeated season alive, etched into the annals of program history as none other than "Holy Buckeye."

By JACK EMERSON

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State's pursuit of a national title in 2002 was headlined by several close calls against the likes of Cincinnati and Wisconsin, but no game quite lives in the hearts of OSU fans like the Buckeyes' nail-biting 10-6 win over Purdue on Nov. 9 – affectionately named "Holy Buckeye."

On paper, Ohio State's trip to West Lafayette, Ind., should have been a routine Big Ten game for the Buckeyes. But, as everyone knows, there was nothing routine about OSU's run to the national title in 2002. OSU needed late-game magic from quarterback Craig Krenzel and wide receiver Michael Jenkins to put away the Boilermakers, and tight end Ben Hartsock likened the win to a microcosm of what the Buckeyes experienced to that point in the season.

"That was our entire season in a nutshell," Hartsock said following the win. "Our entire year of preparation and everything came down to that moment."

Purdue limped into the game at 4-5 and losers of three of its last four contests, snapping a three-game losing streak the week prior against Northwestern. However, the Boilermakers were better than their record appeared. Their five losses came by a combined 22 points. Their largest margin of defeat was just seven points, which occurred twice against Notre Dame (24-17) and Illinois (38-31).

Making matters worse for the Boilermakers was their involvement in an in-season quarterback competition. Incumbent starter Kyle Orton had lost the job after struggles to find consistency, while backup Brandon Kirsch filled the void admirably, helping lead Purdue in the win over the Wildcats. Despite Kirsch's breakout, Orton was once again pegged as the starter against the Buckeyes after Kirsch sustained a hand injury in a fight at a fraternity party prior to the game.

Although this version of Purdue wasn't the most threatening opponent, the journey to Ross-Ade Stadium was not always the most forgiving for the Buckeyes. Just two years prior, Ohio State had waltzed into West Lafayette with a 6-1 record and Rose Bowl aspirations, only for those dreams to be crushed in heartbreaking fashion by the Boilermakers.

In a game that would become known as "Holy Toledo" by Purdue fans, Boilermaker quarterback Drew Brees overcame a quartet of interceptions to lead the home team past the Buckeyes in a stunning come-from-behind upset. Brees tossed a trio of touchdown strikes in the game's fourth quarter, including the game-winning 64-yard score to streaking wide receiver Seth Morales with 1:55 remaining in regulation. The late score prompted announcer Brent Musburg-



FILE PHOTO

DIVINE INTERVENTION — OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel's 37-yard touchdown strike to wideout Michael Jenkins in the closing minutes of the Buckeyes' 10-6 win over Purdue on Nov. 9, 2002, was the highlight of a game that would later become known as "Holy Buckeye" by Ohio State fans.

er to exclaim "Holy Toledo!" as Morales strode into the end zone.

Ohio State safety Mike Doss played the role of both the savior and pariah in that 2000 loss, registering two picks and a game-high 11 tackles but allowed Morales to get open on the game-winning score. Prior to the Buckeyes' trip in 2002, Doss said that 2000 game still lived in his head.

"You want to go out and play well your last time, and I have some unpleasant memories from last time," Doss said. "We lost the game, and that motivates you to go out and do better. We've been making plays all year, but this is another week and another team. What happened last week or two weeks ago won't matter in this game."

Although the Buckeyes got the Boilermakers back for that loss a year later, with a resounding 35-9 win at Ohio Stadium, long-time Ohio State football beat reporter and BSB alum Steve Helwagen said that the 2000 game remained a disappointing memory for the team's veterans heading into the 2002 meeting.

"They wanted to go back there and get a win, where they had lost previously and that was kind of a heartbreaking loss," Helwagen said. "That 2000 team was looking to make a breakthrough and contend in the Big Ten, and they were still in it in the end but that loss really hurt."

"For the guys who were veteran players on the Ohio State team, I think that they definitely wanted to go in there and win. They knew going to Purdue could be a tough one based on what had happened the last time they were there."

Bill Conley, who served as the team's recruiting coordinator and tight ends coach, said the Buckeyes had largely put that loss behind them upon their return to West Lafayette.

"There was probably a little bit of it, but I don't recall us harping on it because we were on such a mission that year to keep

winning," Conley said. "I think it was more than anything."

Unlike in 2000, the Buckeyes rolled into their meeting with Purdue with national championship aspirations. Ohio State carried a 10-0 record into the contest, but despite their lofty record, the Buckeyes were also battle-tested, with several tight wins earlier in the season that were highlighted by a come-from-behind, 23-19 victory at Cincinnati and a 19-14 win at Wisconsin in which the Buckeyes didn't allow a point in the second half.

Conley noted that the Buckeyes' resilience came from the team's cohesion as a unit, along with a solid crop of leaders to help them through adverse moments during the season.

"That team had tremendous camaraderie," Conley said. "We were a team that I think the highest rank we had going into the year was 13th, on the AP poll. It was really a matter of fact of how they were just so determined. And they were really a tight-knit group of guys."

"The main thing were the intangibles, such as the leadership, the camaraderie, the fortitude, the determination, all of those things you talk about, that team had it all."

The Buckeyes put their undefeated record to the test with a noon kickoff at Ross-Ade Stadium. Overcast skies and wind speeds of around 20 miles per hour set the scene for the contest, and Ohio State kicker Mike Nugent sent the opening kickoff into the end zone for a touchback.

Purdue's opening drive served as something of a precedent for the overall tone of the game. The Boilermakers quickly marched inside the Ohio State red zone, aided by a 15-yard personal foul from the Buckeyes on the first play from scrimmage. But Orton's inconsistency flared up when he set his sights on the end zone on third-and-7, finding OSU cornerback Dustin Fox instead of his intended target, John Standeford.

Ohio State's afternoon on offense began the way it ended, with a connection between Krenzel and Jenkins – this time for a gain of 19 yards. However, the Buckeyes could not get their running game on track, with freshman tailback Maurice Clarett not at full strength while dealing with a shoulder injury. Clarett reeled off three consecutive runs following the completion to Jenkins but netted just 9 yards, forcing the Buckeyes to punt.

The running game remained an issue for the entire contest. Ohio State registered a season-low 94 yards for a lowly 2.4 yards per attempt on the ground against the Boilermakers. Some of the Buckeyes' struggles on the ground could be attributed to Purdue selling out against the run. In fact, Purdue linebacker Niko Koutouvides said the Boilermakers "spent the last two weeks preparing to play the run" during the lead-up to the game.

"We ran inside a lot, and their linemen got in the habit of pinching a lot," said Ohio State running back Lydell Ross, who finished with 24 yards on 11 carries. "That affected us inside. Their defense is used to stopping the run and good at stopping it."

Helwagen noted that Ohio State's struggle to get the running game working efficiently was the primary reason for the Buckeyes' inability to score for a majority of the game.

"One of the biggest issues was Ohio State couldn't run the ball," Helwagen said. "That was what Ohio State's entire offense was predicated on, being efficient running the football."

"They weren't sustaining drives, they weren't moving the ball, and it was just a miserable day trying to establish the run. Maurice Clarett was kind of in and out and banged up at times, and he was their main guy and if he wasn't going good, then it became really difficult for the offense."

Purdue punted on its second possession of the day, and the Buckeyes saw a little more success offensively during their own second drive.

Ohio State strung together a pair of first downs on completions to wide receiver/defensive back Chris Gamble and Hartsock, but Krenzel tried to force the ball to wide receiver Bam Childress on a slant route on third-and-2, which wound up deflected into the air and into the hands of Koutouvides. The Purdue linebacker returned the interception 21 yards to set up the Boilermakers at the Ohio State 23-yard line.

Despite their solid field position, the Boilermakers could muster just 19 yards in six plays and were forced to settle for a field goal, jumping out to a 3-0 lead.

The score would remain 3-0 for much of the first half, as Ohio State punted on its next two possessions with a missed field goal by Purdue sandwiched in between. The Buckeyes then found some life when Orton threw his second interception of the game, hauled in by Matt Wilhelm at Purdue's 41-yard line with 3:15 remaining in the half.

Ohio State quickly churned out a pair of first downs to enter the red zone for the first – and only – time that afternoon. After a throwaway from Krenzel and a 1-yard rush from Clarett, the Buckeyes used their final timeout of the half with 19 ticks remaining

on the clock. Krenzel and the offense retook the field following the timeout facing a third-and-9 but made a crucial mistake as Krenzel dashed for a first down, which in turn would have forced the game clock to stop as the chain operators adjusted, but he was ruled 2 yards short of the line to gain, and the clock kept running.

As the seconds ticked away on the half, Nugent and the field-goal unit rushed onto the field and snapped the ball with one second remaining, and Nugent's 22-yard attempt split the uprights to give the Buckeyes their first score of the afternoon. However, the play was not met without controversy. Purdue head coach Joe Tiller quickly hounded the officiating crew to wave off the field goal – claiming that the Buckeyes had not gotten the snap off in time – before heading into the locker room. However, Conley made it clear that Ohio State completed the play prior to the half.

“That’s one play that sometimes gets overlooked in that game,” Conley said. “That ended up being a crucial difference in the game. Everyone thinks about the pass from Krenzel to Jenkins, but really it was that field goal that kind of saved the day for us.

“We looked at it multiple times. There’s no doubt we got it off.”

Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel emphasized that the Buckeyes planned to throw the ball away, rather than have Krenzel run for a first down, while Krenzel admitted his error following the game.

“In retrospect, the field-goal team did a good job getting on the field and making that kick,” Krenzel said. “That was a big three points for us going into halftime.”

The second half provided more of the same for the Buckeye offense, as their first drive out of the locker room resulted in just 13 yards on five plays and a punt.

The Boilermakers displayed a significant wrinkle in their offensive game plan after the half, when Kirsch relieved Orton after his two first-half interceptions. Kirsch came out firing on the Boilermakers’ first drive of the second half, completing all five of his pass attempts for 40 yards and adding a pair of carries for 10 yards. While Kirsch gave the Purdue offense some newfound energy, it didn’t result in points for the Boilermakers after the drive stalled at the Ohio State 37-yard line, prompting Tiller to punt on fourth-and-1.

After an Ohio State three-and-out, Purdue also remained stagnant offensively, ultimately traveling just 4 yards in seven plays due to a holding penalty that stalled the drive. The Buckeyes finally picked up some momentum on the ensuing punt, which was blocked and recovered by Jenkins at the Purdue 37-yard line. However, Ohio State’s offense still couldn’t muster a first down – losing 5 yards in three plays and electing to punt.

Again, the Buckeyes and Boilermakers traded three-and-outs to start the fourth quarter. Purdue finally broke the tie with an eight-play, 65-yard drive which was sparked by a 58-yard completion from Kirsch to Ray Williams on the first play of the possession, to set up a 32-yard field goal from Berin Lacevic to put the Boilers up 6-3 with 7:50 remaining.

The Buckeyes looked eager to respond on their next possession, as back-to-back first-down catches by Jenkins helped Ohio State quickly move to midfield. But the

drive stalled yet again after a pair of runs netted just a yard, and the Buckeyes punted the ball away with under five minutes to go. Ohio State’s defense came up huge, however, forcing another three-and-out and putting the ball in the offense’s hands with 3:10 to go in the game.

“Our defense played like crazy and played hard,” Tressel said after the game. “Purdue came in with a good plan and threw the ball out and completed it.

“Our defense wouldn’t bend. Our coaches were communicating with them about what we had to stop. That’s the way our kids play.”

Gamble gave the Buckeyes life with a 22-yard punt return to set up Ohio State’s final shot at keeping its unbeaten season alive from the Purdue 46-yard line. However, a Krenzel sack and an incompleting to Hartsock quickly put Ohio State behind schedule. Facing a pivotal third-and-14, Krenzel appeared to be under duress with several Boilermakers collapsing the pocket, but he stepped up and found his safety valve in Hartsock for a gain of 13 yards, setting up a do-or-die fourth-and-1 from the Purdue 37-yard line.

“They had been in this tough spot so many times, and now here they are again, and you’re like, ‘Geez, is this a team of destiny that’s going to find a way to win this game, or is it all going to go down the tubes right here?’ ” Helwagen said of his thoughts prior to the play.

As Helwagen, the Purdue defense and much of the 65,250 fans in the stands at Ross-Ade Stadium expected a run, Krenzel, instead, dropped back to pass. Although Hartsock was the first read on the play, running parallel to the line of scrimmage, Krenzel barely spared him a glance before stepping up in the pocket and uncorking a bomb toward a streaking Jenkins, who had created a step of separation from Purdue cornerback Antwaun Rogers down the left side of the field. The ball landed right into the arms of Jenkins, who caught it as he strode into the end zone for the go-ahead, 37-yard touchdown.

As Morales’ touchdown did just two years prior, Jenkins’ score sent Musburger into a frenzy on the ABC broadcast before he placed his stamp on the game by exclaiming “Holy Buckeye!”

“When Mike caught that touchdown, I had a flashback,” Ohio State safety Donnie Nicky said. “But it was the flip side. It felt good.”

Buckeye Sports Bulletin alum Eric Loughry watched the game from the field, and as Jenkins caught the pass, he was overcome with emotion. That moment was captured and immortalized in a photo of him celebrating in the background of the Buckeyes’ jubilation following the score, and Loughry noted that the photo was hung up in his parents’ living room for years after the game.

As someone who witnessed the play from up close, Loughry said that the atmosphere in the stadium completely flipped following the touchdown.

“Before that play, for at least the back half of the fourth quarter, the Purdue student section, and I’m sure other fans too, were behind the Ohio State sideline and they were chanting the old, classic ‘Over-rated!’ ” Loughry said. “After that pass, I remember a lot of Ohio State players, and

not just a few, a lot of them turned around and started chanting, ‘Undefeated!’ and that was really cool.”

The game didn’t just end there, however. Ohio State needed one more stop on defense as the Boilermakers – with two timeouts still remaining – had the opportunity to drive and take the lead.

“There was still like 1:36 left,” Gamble said. “We knew we just had to go out there and play our hearts out. We told ourselves we had to go out and stop their offense.”

Tiller elected to put the ball in Orton’s hands, primarily due to his arm strength, and he converted a first down on a 13-yard pass to Standeford, but after an incompleting and just a 6-yard gain to Taylor Stubblefield, the Boilermakers faced a third-and-4 from their own 39-yard line. After the snap, Orton was flushed out to the right while looking for a home-run play and threw the ball deep into double coverage, where Gamble jumped in front of the route to secure the win with an interception.

Helwagen emphasized that the value of a player such as Gamble who could impact the game both offensively and defensively was huge for the Buckeyes that season and popped up in the win over Purdue.

“It’s unheard of because you have to practice on both sides of the football during the week to perfect your craft and so he’s splitting time,” Helwagen said. “In this game he had three catches for 51 yards, and then on defense he had an interception (and five tackles, all solo). But they were using him in every aspect of the game. They’re using him in so many different ways.

“He was one of a kind, no doubt.”

Following the win, Tressel heaped praise upon both teams for leaving it all on the field and said it was another example of a great Big Ten football game.

“No matter what stadium you go to in this league, it will be a battle until the end,” the coach said. “Both teams fought extremely hard, and Purdue played extremely hard and fought like crazy. We said all week they could be sitting there with eight or nine wins.

“Our players kept playing and our coaches kept coaching. Our guys didn’t fold and kept hanging in and kept plugging away. We always talk about if we keep banging, something good will happen.”

Krenzel finished the game 13 of 20 for 173 yards, the TD and an interception. Jenkins caught five of those passes for 87 yards.

Ohio State also received some good news when just hours later Oklahoma – one of three remaining unbeaten teams – was stunned by Texas A&M in a 30-26 loss. This left just the Buckeyes and Miami (Fla.) as the remaining undefeated teams in the country, a result that would hold until the BCS National Championship Game, which was played at the Fiesta Bowl in Tempe, Ariz.

The Buckeyes had passed several regular-season tests, “Holy Buckeye” included, and Conley emphasized that it gave them invaluable experience for the double-overtime affair that was the Fiesta Bowl.

“It obviously is huge because we had been there before – we experienced it,” Conley said. “We knew we had to fight for every yard we could get.”



Reynolds Travel “On the Road Again” for 2022 Ohio State Football Away Games

Reynolds Travel is once again offering packages to all 2022 Ohio State Away Football Games and a Bengals vs. Browns Same Day trip and hope you can join us for another great football season. Here is a listing but full details are available on our website at www.reynoldstavel.com.

OSU vs Maryland — Nov. 17-20: Three-night motorcoach trip to Alexandria, Virginia (land-only package available) at the Alexandrian Hotel in the center of Alexandria with breakfast daily, a tour of the Naval Academy with lunch at the Academy Club, and a tour of Mount Vernon and game tickets in the Ohio State Visitor Section and roundtrip transportation to College Park, Maryland for the game.

NFL Game-Bengals vs. Browns — Dec. 11: Same day motorcoach trip to Cincinnati and game tickets in Section 334 in lower rows.

Reynolds Travel — Arranging Ohio State Away, Play-off and Bowl trips since 1978!
Visit our website at www.reynoldstravel.com to see more.



8905 Commerce Loop Dr.
Columbus, OH 43240
Phone: 614-847-8008
Toll Free: 866-880-0577

Massive Renovation Project Marks 8th Decade

Throughout the 2022 football season, Buckeye Sports Bulletin is publishing stories commemorating the 100th anniversary of Ohio Stadium. This week, BSB looks at the Horseshoe's eighth decade (1992-2001) that featured thrilling victories, crushing defeats, and the most ambitious renovation project to that time in stadium history.

By **MARK REA**

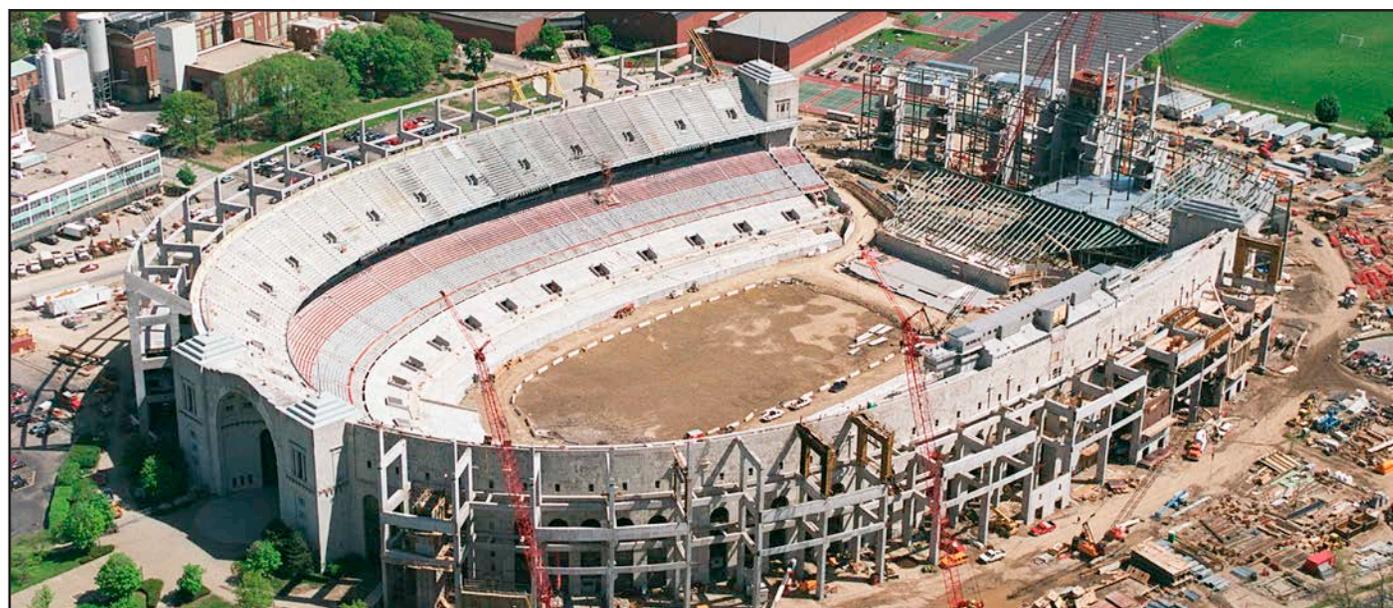
BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

While the Ohio State football team provided almost equal measures of triumph and tribulation throughout the 1990s, it was a massive renovation project and another coaching change that marked the latter half of the eighth decade of existence for Ohio Stadium.

John Cooper was struggling to gain a foothold after his first three seasons as head coach of the Buckeyes had produced a 19-14-2 record. It was the worst 35-game stretch since the early 1920s and was underscored by three consecutive losses to archrival Michigan, each more excruciating than the last.

No Ohio State head coach had ever survived losing three straight games to the Wolverines, yet Cooper had been awarded a contract extension just prior to a 31-3 loss in Ann Arbor in the 1991 regular-season finale, the worst loss in the rivalry for the Buckeyes since a 58-6 defeat in Columbus in 1946.

That defeat, coupled with a third consecutive bowl loss, sent Cooper's record to 27-18-2, a .574 winning percentage that ranked eighth among the nine men who had coached the Buckeyes for at least four sea-



FILE PHOTO

RESTORING A LEGEND — Ohio Stadium underwent an extensive renovation project following the 1997 football season, further expanding its capacity as well as club level seating and press accommodations.

sons.

To say the OSU fan base was restless would be understating the obvious.

Perhaps even worse was the fact that the popularity of Ohio State football seemed to be waning. Under longtime head coach Woody Hayes, the Buckeyes had led all of college football in attendance for 14 consecutive seasons from 1958 to 1971, but they had recently slipped to fourth in national attendance average behind Michigan, Tennessee and Penn State.

Ohio State athletic director Jim Jones,

who served four years as an academic counselor for Hayes, was reluctant to make any drastic changes in the university's football program whether it was with the head coach or the home stadium.

Cooper was the first significant hire for Jones, who had been elevated to his position after predecessor Rick Bay resigned when instructed to fire Earle Bruce, and the AD desperately wanted Cooper to succeed. As for Ohio Stadium, Jones repeatedly cited the facility's standing on the National Register of Historic Places, saying he was not interested in any project that would alter the unique horseshoe shape of the stadium.

But after Jones accepted an early retirement package in 1994, his successor had a completely different view of stadium renovation and expansion.

Andy Geiger had crisscrossed the country during an athletic administration career

that began in 1964 as an associate athletic director at his alma mater Syracuse. By the time he got to Ohio State, Geiger had spent a combined 23 years as a director of athletics at Brown, Penn, Stanford and Maryland.

What he saw on campus were aging facilities for the university's marquee sports, and Geiger almost immediately began to formulate a program for construction and renovation. The program eventually included building new facilities for the basketball, baseball, track, soccer and lacrosse teams, but the most ambitious of Geiger's projects was the overhaul of Ohio Stadium that began shortly after the 1997 football season was completed.

The initial part of the project involved removal of the track that surrounded the playing surface. That allowed a 45-foot slurry wall to be built underneath the field, meaning the playing surface could be lowered below the water table and virtually eliminate the possibility of flooding. Lowering the field allowed additional seating to be placed closer to the action.

Meanwhile, a new deck was added to the west side of the stadium. The D deck, which increased capacity by more than 2,500 seats and became a fourth viewing level in the stadium, was placed where the old press box was located. Replacing the old press box was a state-of-the-art facility that can accommodate more than 225 members of the press corps and sits more than 160 feet above the field.

The new press box also contained a suite for the university president and visiting guests, new booths for television and radio broadcasts, and three-tier seating for print media on either side of the 50-yard line.

More than 80 private luxury suites were also added to the west side of Ohio Stadium between A and C decks. The original suites held up to 16 people and featured carpeted floors, padded couches and chairs, a television, and a refrigerator stocked with non-alcoholic beverages. Suite owners were also afforded the opportunity of ordering catered food.

"The suites help pay for about 80 percent of the construction project," Geiger said at the time. "These are diehard fans

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL TICKETS!

We have your seats to the season's hottest action!

For Your Ticket Connection Call:

DREAM SEATS

YOUR TOTAL TICKET SOURCE

1611 W. FIFTH AVE. COLUMBUS, OH 43212

(614) 340-8989

www.dreamseats.com

All NCAA & NFL Games in Stock!

all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events

BSB'S

MARK REA

The

LEGENDS

MAKES a *Return*

THE LEGENDS VOLUME I

\$22.00 | 342 Pages

THE LEGENDS VOLUME II

\$24.00 | 374 Pages

ORDER YOUR COPY OF

The LEGENDS: Ohio State Buckeyes; the Men, the Deeds, the Consequences Volumes I & II

at ORANGEFRAZER.COM or at AMAZON.COM

Or call 937.382.3196

who can see the game from a living room atmosphere but still enjoy the other things around the stadium.”

On A deck just below the suite level, approximately 2,500 red club seats were added that featured the OSU athletic logo and offered more comfort than bleacher seats.

Additional space was added under the northeast stands for the marching band to practice and/or escape inclement weather. And the Block “O” cheering section was moved from the north end of the stadium to the south end just behind the band.

The concourse was widened 40 feet to allow for twice as many concession stands and booths as well as better restroom access. Restroom facilities were updated, and the number of restrooms throughout the stadium were increased sixfold. Additionally, the number of elevators to get fans to B and C decks was increased from one to 11. Escalators were also added as well as ramps to better accommodate the physically disabled.

“We have become more fan-friendly,” Geiger said. “We want fans to have access to things around the stadium.”

There were also cosmetic changes, including three stained-glass panels to greet fans at the north rotunda of the stadium. Each panel measures approximately 18½ feet high and 12 feet wide, and they are lit from behind to feature a Block “O” flanked by offensive and defensive scenes. And the south end zone scoreboard was replaced by a video board measuring 90 feet by 30 feet and featuring replays, highlights, animations, graphics and statistical information.

Finally, the Buckeye Grove was moved from different parts around the stadium to a central location behind the southwest end of the facility.

As a result of the three-year renovation project, which was completed just before the 2001 season opener, stadium capacity rose to 101,568.

The original estimate for the renovation project was approximately \$145 million, but the final price tag was \$194 million. Still, Geiger said at the time it was a bargain compared to what building a new stadium would have cost.

“I would stack this stadium up with any in the country,” he said. “We’re proud of our Horseshoe. We’ve taken an 80-year-old building and preserved it for another 80 years.”

Tide Turns Gradually

While the massive stadium renovation was still somewhere on an architect’s drafting board, there was considerable conjecture whether Cooper would still be around to see the completed project.

After guiding the Buckeyes to their poorest four-year showing since the early 1920s, Cooper presided over a 20-19 decision against Louisville in the 1992 season opener. Victory was secured only when the Cardinals failed on a two-point conversion try with 33 seconds remaining, and most of the 89,653 on hand in the Horseshoe vented their full-throated frustration at the coach.

That frustration threatened to bubble over into outright rebellion in mid-October when Ohio State lost an 18-16 decision to Illinois, the team’s fifth straight loss to the Fighting Illini.

The outcome was especially tough to take as a crowd of 93,982 watched the Buckeyes commit three turnovers, including two fumbles inside the Illinois 5-yard line by

freshman running back Eddie George. The first of those fumbles came in the opening quarter and was returned 96 yards for a touchdown by Illinois safety Jeff Arneson. OSU also gave up a safety in the game, and kicker Tim Williams missed two field-goal attempts, including a potential game-winner from 44 yards during the final minute.

But somehow a tie in the regular-season finale saved Cooper and his program. After four years of futility against Michigan, the Buckeyes and their beleaguered head coach finally broke through in 1992 – albeit with a 13-13 tie that OSU president Dr. E. Gordon Gee termed “one of our greatest victories.”

Gee has been ridiculed over the past 30 years for that statement, but it had kernels of truth to it at the time. Playing on a rain-slickened field in front of 95,330 soaked fans, the Buckeyes somehow managed to overcome a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter, getting a 30-yard field goal from Williams at the 12:16 mark of the final period and a 5-yard touchdown pass from Kirk Herbstreit to Greg Beatty with 4:24 to go in the game.

Although a Citrus Bowl loss to Georgia followed, the tie against Michigan seemed to serve as a turning point of sorts for the Ohio State program under Cooper. In 1993, the Buckeyes enjoyed their first 10-win season in seven years, kicking things off with a 34-7 win against Rice in the opener and a 21-12 victory against No. 12-ranked Washington in only the second night game ever played in the Horseshoe.

A crowd of 94,109 was on hand as the Buckeyes held Huskies All-America running back Napoleon Kaufman to just 51 yards on 18 carries. Meanwhile, Raymont Harris and Butler By’not’e combined for 182 yards and two touchdowns, and receiver Joey Galloway caught four passes for 104 yards, including a 35-yard score.

Seven weeks later, OSU and Harris provided Penn State with a rude welcome to the Big Ten as the Buckeyes rolled to a 24-6 mauling of the Nittany Lions. A crowd of 95,060 braved freezing temperatures and intermittent snow squalls to watch Harris pile up 151 yards and a touchdown on 32 carries. The loss was one of only two that season for Penn State, but the other came against Michigan, and the Nittany Lions (despite 10 victories) had to settle for a third-place finish in their first season as members of the Big Ten.

Penn State and legendary head coach Joe Paterno got their payback – and then some – in Happy Valley the following season, administering a 63-14 thrashing to the Buckeyes that reignited withering criticism of Cooper. But the coach somehow rallied his team to three straight victories to close out the regular season, capping the run with a 22-6 upset win against No. 15 Michigan in front of 93,869 approving fans.

Ohio State set the tone early by tackling Michigan quarterback Todd Collins in the end zone for a first-quarter safety. The Buckeyes held a 12-0 advantage late in the second period, and then after spotting the Wolverines a pair of field goals, they closed things out with a 36-yard field goal from Josh Jackson and a 2-yard touchdown run from George in the fourth quarter. Jackson’s field goal was set up when cornerback Marlon Kerner blocked a Michigan three-point

Continued On Page 24

SEE WHAT YOU’VE BEEN MISSING ON BUCKEYESPORTS.COM Free To Print Subscribers

The screenshot shows the Buckeye Sports Bulletin website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for HOME, FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, SPORTS, FORUM, BSB ONLINE, EAT & STAY, and a LOG OUT button. Below the navigation bar, there's a main content area featuring a large image of a football game. Overlaid on the image is a text box that reads: "OHIO STATE-MARYLAND TO KICK OFF AT 3:30 ON ABC". To the right of the image, there are several article teasers. The first one is titled "Recap: Stroud and Williams Shine as No. 2 Ohio State defeats Indiana, 56-14" and includes a "READ MORE" link. Below that is another teaser titled "Buckeye Leaves: Harrison Jr., Ransom, Williams Stand Out Against Hoosiers" with a "READ MORE" link. At the bottom right, there's a section titled "Availability Report: Henderson, JSN Remain Out; Dawand Jones A Game-Time Decision".

Buckeye Sports Bulletin has expanded its online presence to a full-service website to complement the 24 annual print editions. Access to BuckeyeSports.com is free to all print subscribers and includes numerous great features like:

- Daily features, analysis and breaking news stories
- A fan forum where readers can interact with the BSB staff and other subscribers while catching up on the latest Buckeye news
- Rosters, scholarship charts, schedules and commit lists for the football team to keep up to date with the Buckeyes
- Electronic versions of the BSB print editions
- The BSB Quickly archive

To sign up for this free service send an email to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send you easy-to-follow instructions on how to enjoy reading Buckeye Sports Bulletin online

Continued From Page 23

er, and George's TD was the result of an interception by OSU nose tackle Luke Fickell.

It was Cooper's first victory against Michigan in seven tries and a prelude to the coach's most successful run as head coach of the Buckeyes.

Stretch Of Success

Cooper began the 1995 season with a loaded team in terms of talent. Seven players were on their way to first-team All-Big Ten accolades. Defensive end Mike Vrabel, wide receiver Terry Glenn, offensive tackle Orlando Pace and tailback Eddie George would be named to the All-America first team, and George was about to become the first Heisman Trophy winner from Ohio State in two decades.

Through his first 80 games at Ohio State, Cooper had produced a record of 51-25-4, good for a middling .663 winning percentage. But after the whipping his team took at Penn State in late October 1994, Cooper guided the Buckeyes to 46 wins over their next 54 games, a winning percentage of .852.

"If you look at that Penn State game, it was in my opinion the turning point in Coach Cooper's tenure at Ohio State," OSU football historian Jack Park told BSB. "From that point on through the next four seasons, the team won two Big Ten championships, finished second the other two years, and came very close to winning two national championships.

"In my opinion, I think you could make a case for that particular stretch being one of the best in Ohio State football history."

Coming near the beginning of that stretch was a game the Buckeyes and their fans had been eagerly anticipating for 60 years. Notre Dame had not visited Ohio Stadium since seizing an 18-13 comeback victory in what was termed "The Game of the Century" in 1935. A then record crowd of 81,108 watched while Ohio State squandered a 13-0 lead heading into the fourth quarter, the winning touchdown delivered on a pass from Fighting Irish quarterback Bill Shakespeare with 32 seconds remaining.

This time, it was Ohio State that overcame an early deficit before rolling to a 45-26 victory before a record Horseshoe crowd of 95,537.

Stars were plentiful on both sides of the ball for the Buckeyes. George carried 32 times for 207 yards and a pair of touchdowns while quarterback Bobby Hoying completed 14 of 22 passes for 272 yards and four scores. Glenn caught four balls for 128 yards and two TDs, including an 82-yarder that was the second-longest scoring pass in OSU history at the time.

On defense, middle linebacker Greg Bellisari had a team-high 12 tackles while fellow linebacker Ryan Miller and Fickell had 10 each. Vrabel also had an excellent game, including a fumble-inducing tackle early in the third quarter that helped turn momentum of the game over to the Buckeyes.

The 45 points were the most ever scored against a Notre Dame team coached by Lou Holtz and the most scored against any Fighting Irish team since a 58-7 loss in the 1985 season finale to Miami (Fla.).

The following season began with back-

to-back blowout wins against Rice and Pitt. A crowd of 93,479 watched as the Buckeyes piled up 632 total yards during a 70-7 win in the season opener against the Owls, and then 93,968 filed through the stadium turnstiles to witness a 72-0 throttling of the Panthers, a game in which Ohio State totaled 602 yards from scrimmage.

It remains the only time in program history the Buckeyes scored 70 or more points in successive games.

OSU rolled to 10 straight victories to open that 1996 season, but an old bugaboo caught up in late November when Michigan came to Columbus and pulled off a 13-9 shocker in front of a stunned crowd of 94,676.

The Buckeyes were dominant in the first half but had to settle for a trio of field goals for a 9-0 lead. Then, the seminal point in the game occurred early in the third quarter. As he was covering Wolverines receiver Tai Streets, OSU cornerback Shawn Springs slipped and fell, allowing Streets free for a 69-yard catch-and-run for the game's only touchdown. Michigan tacked on a pair of late field goals while holding the potent Ohio State offense scoreless in the second half.

The Buckeyes rebounded with a come-from-behind victory against Arizona State in the Rose Bowl and finished No. 2 in The Associated Press writers' poll, their best showing since a similar finish in 1974.

Two years later, it was déjà vu for the Buckeyes, only this time the dagger came from another team from that state up north.

Undefeated Ohio State was working on an eight-game winning streak and protecting the nation's No. 1 ranking when it fell victim to unranked Michigan State in an inexplicable 28-24 upset loss.

A crowd of 93,595 attended the late-afternoon affair that began with the Buckeyes jumping out to a 17-3 lead after the first quarter. Then when OSU cornerback Damon Moore returned an interception 73 yards for a touchdown early in the third period, the Buckeyes enjoyed what seemed to be a comfortable 24-9 advantage.

But the Spartans, led by fourth-year head coach Nick Saban, kept chipping away.

Combining four second-half turnovers by Ohio State and a career passing day from MSU quarterback Bill Burke, who threw for 323 yards and a touchdown, the Spartans scored the final 19 points of the afternoon to secure the win. The Buckeyes still had a chance near the end of the game, but QB Joe Germaine was intercepted at the goal line with 1:12 remaining.

Again, Ohio State regrouped to win its final three games, including a 31-16 victory against Michigan in front of 94,339 wind-chilled fans on a cold November afternoon in the Horseshoe. The Buckeyes finished second in the final AP poll for the second time in three years, but unfortunately, that was as good as it got during the Cooper era.

The Buckeyes slipped to a 6-6 record in 1999, but the season still featured some Horseshoe history. During halftime of a 41-11 homecoming win against Iowa in late October, a crowd of 93,561 watched as the university honored two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin by officially retiring his No. 45 jersey. Griffin was the first to receive the honor and has since been followed by Troy Smith (10), Les Horvath (22), George (27), Vic Janowicz (31), Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy (40), Chic Harley

(47) and Bill Willis (99).

Ohio State rebounded to an 8-4 mark in 2000, but that record included a 29-17 homecoming loss to Minnesota in front of 98,120 shocked fans as well as an ugly 38-24 loss to Michigan witnessed by 98,568, which set another new stadium record. The Buckeyes had a 400-391 advantage in total yardage and had 22 first downs to 16 for the Wolverines, but OSU quarterback Steve Bellisari was intercepted three times and the Buckeyes turned the ball over three other times on downs.

That was followed by a lackluster 24-7 loss to a four-loss and unranked South Carolina team in the Outback Bowl, and amid whispers that Cooper had lost control of his team, Geiger fired the coach after 13 seasons.

In Cooper's place, the Buckeyes conducted another nationwide search, although they didn't have to look any farther than 175 miles to their northeast.

Tressel Era Begins

Jim Tressel, the son of legendary Ohio high school and small college coach Lee Tressel, had served three seasons on Earle Bruce's staff at Ohio State during the mid-1980s after which he became head coach at Youngstown State, where he won four Division I-AA national championships.

But Tressel had never before led a team at the major-college level, and it seemed the university was poised to select Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti or Minnesota head coach Glen Mason, an OSU alum who had played and coached for Hayes. But the search committee quickly focused on Tressel, and less than three weeks after Cooper's dismissal, the then 48-year-old Tressel was introduced as the new head coach of the Buckeyes. He wasted little time endearing himself to the faithful.

Speaking to a sellout Value City Arena crowd of 18,653 at halftime of the OSU-Michigan men's basketball game, Tressel said, "I can assure you that you will be proud of your young people in the classroom, in the community, and most especially in 310 days in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on the football field."

Echoes from the ovation Tressel received were still being heard nine months later when the football team took the field in the 2001 season opener against Akron. The stadium renovation project had been completed, and Ohio Stadium attendance cracked six figures for the first time with a record crowd of 102,602 helping to usher in the Tressel era with a 28-14 victory.

Four weeks later, another attendance record was set when 104,042 showed up to watch Ohio State roll to a 38-20 win against Northwestern in the first night game at the Horseshoe featuring a Big Ten opponent.

The euphoria gradually faded as the Buckeyes finished with a 7-5 record that included home losses to Wisconsin and Illinois and another Outback Bowl loss to South Carolina. But Tressel made good on his promise to make Buckeye Nation proud of its team when the Buckeyes went to Ann Arbor in late November and came home with a 26-20 victory.

That win against the Wolverines not only turned the tide in what had become a one-sided rivalry, it served as a launchpad for one of the most exciting and unexpected seasons in Ohio Stadium history.

Shade RESTAURANTS

- NFL Ticket
- So Many HD, Flat-Screen TVs!
- Friendliest Staff
- GREAT Food

Shade on the Canal
19 S. High St.
Canal Winchester
614-837-9873

Shade on 30th St.
850 S. 30th St.
Heath
740-788-9287

Shade on State St.
994 E. State St.
Athens
740-566-1009

Unraveling The Big Ten's West Division Race

The Nov. 26 renewal of Ohio State and Michigan's rivalry will officially be a de facto Big Ten East championship game, as all other eastern division challengers have been eliminated from contention. Questions as to who will represent the conference's western division in the Big Ten Championship Game remain very much unresolved, however.

BIG TEN NOTES Andy Anders

After Purdue upset No. 21 Illinois on the Fighting Illini's home field Nov. 12, four teams – Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Purdue – were tied atop the Big Ten West standings with 4-3 conference records.

In the case of a divisional tie between two teams at the end of the regular season, the head-to-head winner would represent the West Division in the Big Ten title game, according to the conference's bylaws. Following that, the Big Ten has an eight-step process for deciding divisional ties between three or more schools. If any step in the process eliminates all but two teams from consideration, the winner of the game between the two teams will again determine who goes to Indianapolis Dec. 3.

The first divisional tiebreaker between three or more teams is the teams' records among each other. Purdue and Illinois both own 2-1 marks against other schools tied at the top of the standings, whereas Minnesota is already 0-2 and Iowa sits at 1-1. Iowa and Minnesota play each other Nov. 19 in a game which will likely serve to eliminate one of the two teams. Should Minnesota win that contest and its final regular-season game, it would need an additional loss from both Purdue and Illinois before the regular season closes to reach the conference title game.

The second divisional tiebreaker, then, is the team with the best record against Big Ten West opponents. Minnesota would have been eliminated already if this stage in the process is reached, so looking at the other three schools, Purdue's Big Ten West record stands at 3-2, with Illinois at 4-1 and Iowa at 3-1.

Should the Fighting Illini, Hawkeyes and Boilermakers win out, the first two tiebreakers would eliminate all but Iowa, whom Illinois beat earlier this season. Should the Wolverines beat the Fighting Illini on Nov. 19, Iowa would then control its own destiny, not only because the Hawkeyes beat Purdue head-to-head, but they would also have the better Big Ten West record should they win out.

If Iowa falls, either at Minnesota or in its season finale against Nebraska, the first conference tiebreaker would have already eliminated the Golden Gophers, and Purdue owns a head-to-head advantage over Illinois. In that scenario, the Boilermakers – with Indiana and North-

western remaining on their schedule – would control their own destiny, rendering the result of Illinois-Michigan moot if Purdue can win out.

There is no team left in the hunt that controls its own destiny, given that all four could possibly be left in a two-team tie with a school that beat them earlier in the year.

Brown, Schoonmaker, Morgan All Injured

Illinois lost the nation's leading rusher to injury against Purdue Nov. 12, and his status going forward is unclear.

Junior running back Chase Brown needed help off the field against the Boilermakers, and he was unable to put any weight on his right leg after going down in the waning moments of the contest. Brown had piled up 1,442 rushing yards and seven touchdowns in 10 games this season, averaging 5.2 yards per carry.

"I don't know anything about Chase's injury, anything along those lines that happened in the second half," Illinois head coach Bret Bielema said after the game. "I don't have any updates."

Meanwhile Michigan's tight end depth took another hit, with starter Erick All already out for the season after receiving knee surgery. Luke Schoonmaker, who has racked up 30 receptions for 315 yards and two touchdowns this season, sat out the Wolverines' win against Nebraska Nov. 12. His injury is undisclosed, though he was evaluated multiple times in Michigan's medical tent against Rutgers the previous week.

Minnesota quarterback Tanner Morgan also missed action Nov. 12 with an upper body injury he suffered against Nebraska Nov. 5. Redshirt freshman Athan Kaliakmanis filled in for the ailing Morgan, completing 7 of 13 passes for 64 yards during a 31-3 win for the Golden Gophers over Northwestern.

"A lot of things on both sides haven't necessarily gone our way," Minnesota head coach P.J. Fleck said after the Northwestern game. "(Our) starting quarterback is out, starting receiver, they've had some quarterback concerns, some injuries. That's part of football. But you've still got to go find a way to win."

Tunnel Investigation Reaches Prosecutor

With the police investigation into the Michigan Stadium tunnel incident between Michigan and Michigan State players concluded, its findings have been turned over to the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office for review, University of Michigan Deputy Police Chief Melissa Overton announced Nov. 12.

The new development in the case comes two weeks after altercations between the Wolverines and Spartans broke out following the game between the two teams. Several videos surfaced on Twitter of the multiple scuffles that broke out, resulting in the indefinite suspensions of Spartans Itayvion "Tank" Brown, Khary Crump, Angelo Grose, Malcolm Jones, Justin White, Jacoby Windmon, Brandon

Wright and Zion Young.

"Consistent with our commitment to transparency and due process, we will not share further information pending the prosecutor's office review," Overton said.

Michigan has since increased its security presence around the tunnel and ensured players from both teams didn't cross paths when Nebraska played the Wolverines in Michigan Stadium on Nov. 12.

Big Ten Basketball Teams Tip Off

College basketball season got under way in the second week of November, and a few Big Ten teams have already played some noteworthy games.

In Wisconsin's case, it played in a noteworthy location. The Badgers bested Stanford Nov. 11 at American Family Field, home of the Milwaukee Brewers, to improve their record to 2-0 on the young season. Forward Tyler Wahl recorded 17 points in the 60-50 win.

It was the first college basketball game at a baseball-only facility since a 2015 game at Petco Park, home of the San Diego Padres.

Meanwhile, Michigan State nearly pulled a stunning upset of No. 2 Gonzaga Nov. 11. The Bulldogs edged out the Spartans 64-63, with Gonzaga forward Drew Timme hitting what proved a game-winning free throw with 1:51 to play.

Michigan State and Gonzaga's tilt also found itself in an interesting location, as the two sides dueled in San Diego atop the USS Abraham Lincoln, an aircraft carrier. As of Nov. 13, the Spartans' loss to the Bulldogs stood as the only blemish on the record of any Big Ten men's basketball team. Rutgers stood at 3-0 while every other team outside the Spartans, with a 1-1 record, was 2-0.

Rutgers Wins Men's Soccer Title

Rutgers took home the Big Ten men's soccer championship Nov. 13, defeating Indiana 3-1 at Yurcak Field in Piscataway, N.J. Being the higher seed over the No. 4-seeded Hoosiers, the No. 2-seeded Scarlet Knights got to collect their hardware in front of a home crowd.

Rutgers midfielder Matthew Acosta kicked off the scoring in the fourth minute, knocking home a goal off assists from MD Myers and Jackson Temple. Indiana did manage to equalize before the end of

BIG

2022 Standings

East Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Michigan	7	0	1.000	10	0	1.000
Ohio State	7	0	1.000	10	0	1.000
Penn State	5	2	0.714	8	2	0.800
Maryland	3	4	0.429	6	4	0.600
Michigan State	3	4	0.429	5	5	0.500
Rutgers	1	6	0.143	4	6	0.400
Indiana	1	6	0.143	3	7	0.300

West Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Illinois	4	3	0.571	7	3	0.700
Minnesota	4	3	0.571	7	3	0.700
Iowa	4	3	0.571	6	4	0.600
Purdue	4	3	0.571	6	4	0.600
Wisconsin	3	4	0.429	5	5	0.500
Nebraska	2	5	0.286	3	7	0.300
Northwestern	1	6	0.143	1	9	0.100

Nov. 12 Games

Ohio State 56, Indiana 14
Purdue 31, Illinois 24
Michigan State 27, Rutgers 21
Michigan 34, Nebraska 3
Minnesota 31, Northwestern 3
Iowa 24, Wisconsin 10
Penn State 30, Maryland 0

Nov. 19 Games

Illinois at Michigan, noon
Indiana at Michigan State, noon
Northwestern at Purdue, noon
Wisconsin at Nebraska, noon
Ohio State at Maryland, 3:30 p.m.
Penn State at Rutgers, 3:30 p.m.
Iowa at Minnesota, 4 p.m.

the half, however, on a goal from Patrick McDonald, who was assisted by Ryan Wittenbrink.

It took the Scarlet Knights less than nine minutes of second-half playing time to take the lead back when forward Ola Maeland knocked home his fourth score of the season to place his team ahead 2-1 in the 54th minute. That proved the game winner, with forward Ian Abbey knocking home a dagger in the 84th minute to set the final score at 3-1.

With the win, Rutgers moved to 10-4-6 on the season and received an automatic bid into the NCAA tournament, which was slated to begin Nov. 17.

TAILGATING'S FINEST

Upgrade your snacks!




Cherry BBQ Sauce Famous Kream Mustard

BBQ Sauces • Mustards • Salsas
Pasta Sauces • Dressings • Fruit Spreads

Find us in select Kroger, Hills, Weiland's and other grocery/specialty stores across the region.
Can't find us? Ask your store to order us.
Crafted with pride in Athens County, Ohio

BrownwoodFarms.com • (866) 589-6456

Day Hoping Strong Finish Boosts 2023 Class

It may feel like just yesterday that Ohio State signed the likes of quarterback Devin Brown, cornerback Jyair Brown and running back Dallan Hayden, freshmen of whom plenty of ink has already been spilled

230) of Venice, Fla., and Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco's Matayo Uiagalelei (6-5, 265). Things appear to have faded somewhat with Keeley, but the Buckeyes are in play, if not the outright leaders, for both Wilson and Uiagalelei.

The Buckeyes also continue to look around at linebacker and keep an eye at running back, not to mention the continued pursuit of Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek five-star safety Caleb Downs (6-0, 185), who is committed to Alabama.

While the focus in recruiting remains on building relationships and providing an advantageous fit for both the prospect and school – though name, image and likeness is another factor to consider now – one way in which Ohio State is hoping to make an impression is on the field. The Buckeyes are off to a 10-0 start this season after demolishing Indiana, 56-14, on Nov. 12, and it continued an impressive run for Ohio State.

Looking for a strong finish on the recruiting trail, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said continued success on the field is one of the most important ways the staff is preparing to close out the 2023 recruiting class.

"Well, we can keep winning, because that plays into it big time," Day said Nov. 8. "All the recruits want to see how well you're playing on Saturday and that what you said in recruiting is actually happening."

Ohio State's offense has shone for most of the season, but the play has also been notable on the defensive side of the ball un-

der defensive coordinator Jim Knowles. Day said that turnaround, especially after what the defense at Ohio State has looked like the last few seasons, has been important for recruits to see.

"I think a big part of that is on defense," Day said. "Some of the things we've talked to recruits about on the defensive side, they had to see it with their own eyes. I think they're doing that. We have our weekly calls and we touch base with guys, but a big part of this is finishing the season strong and making sure they see where we're at as a program."

"As you project out in college football, you want to make sure you're part of a program that's winning and has a lot of stability, and that's something we sell a lot."

While Day and his staff are doing their best to convince prospects that Columbus is the best fit for them, the program is also working to recruit players who are the best

OSU Football 2023 Commitments

Players in the class of 2023 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jayden Bonsu	SAF	6-1	210	★★★★	Hillside (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep
Mark Fletcher	RB	6-1	225	★★★★	Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage
Brock Glenn	QB	6-2	195	★★★★	Memphis (Tenn.) Lausanne Collegiate
Malik Hartford	SAF	6-3	175	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West
Cedrick Hawkins	SAF	6-0	175	★★★★	Titusville (Fla.) Cocoa
Brandon Inniss	WR	6-0	190	★★★★★	Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage
Kayin Lee	CB	5-11	185	★★★★	Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove
Jermaine Mathews	CB	6-0	175	★★★★	Cincinnati Winton Woods
Kayden McDonald	DT	6-3	310	★★★★	Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett
Luke Montgomery	OT	6-5	280	★★★★	Findlay, Ohio
Jason Moore	DE	6-6	255	★★★★	Hyattsville (Md.) DeMatha Catholic
Joshua Padilla	OG	6-4	280	★★★★	Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne
Arvell Reese	LB	6-4	212	★★★★	Cleveland Glenville
Bryson Rodgers	WR	6-1	175	★★★★	Zephyrhills (Fla.) Wiregrass Ranch
Noah Rogers	WR	6-2	195	★★★★	Rolesville, N.C.
Austin Sierveld	OL	6-5	320	★★★★	Middletown (Ohio) Lakota East
Calvin Simpson-Hunt	CB	6-0	175	★★★★	Waxahachie, Texas
Will Smith Jr.	DL	6-3	260	★★★★	Dublin (Ohio) Coffman
Carnell Tate	WR	6-2	185	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy
Jelani Thurman	TE	6-5	230	★★★★	Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes
Miles Walker	OT	6-6	285	★★★	Greenwich (Conn.) Brunswick School

fit for Ohio State.

"That's everything right now," Day said. "I guess I could say more than ever – I'm sure it's been like this for 30 years here – but you have to make sure that you're recruiting great people. With the way that things have changed with the transfer portal, with NIL, a culture fit is critically important because not every day is going to be perfect, and you want to have guys that want to be Buckeyes for the right reasons and that are going to work through adversity and tough times. That's a big part of the recruiting process."

2023 LB Carter Takes Official Visit For IU Game

Smyrna, Tenn., four-star linebacker Arion Carter (6-1, 210) made his official visit to Ohio State the weekend of Nov. 12, marking the first trip to Columbus for the 2023 prospect.

Carter – the No. 317 overall prospect and No. 24 linebacker in the class – is currently committed to Memphis, but that commitment isn't expected to hold with official visits scheduled for Michigan (Nov. 19), Alabama (Nov. 26) and Tennessee (Dec. 2).

"It's hard to see him sticking with Memphis at this point," Buckeye Huddle recruiting analyst Marc Givler told BSB. "With Alabama, Tennessee and Ohio State all being involved, it just seems like that's not going to happen."

"Obviously, it's a huge weekend for that recruitment as far as Ohio State goes. They're going to know a lot coming out of this weekend. They've been watching him for a little bit, but he just hasn't had the offer very long. They're kind of playing catch-up on getting to learn about him and know him."

Carter was offered by Ohio State on Sept. 30, and his stock has risen dramatically in recent months. He committed to Memphis back in July, but in a span from Sept. 17 through Sept. 30, he received offers from Alabama, Florida, LSU, Michigan, Ole Miss, Oregon, Tennessee and USC in addition to his offer from the Buckeyes.

He's offered some impressive film to coaches from his senior season in which he

Get your sex life back!

And your youthful energy too...
With Columbus Men's Clinic!



Specializing in erectile dysfunction, premature issues, acoustic wave therapy, and testosterone replacement.

Get your first office visit, testosterone level, and PSA check for free! That's a \$300 value.

Don't wait! Call today!

614.300.7400

Walk-ins Welcome
1507 Chambers Rd, Ste 208
Columbus, OH 43212



COLUMBUS
MEN'S CLINIC

www.ColumbusMensClinic.com

Help BSB Grow

Loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers frequently ask us what they can do to help keep BSB vibrant in this increasingly electronic age. One of the things readers can do is introduce BSB to new readers who might find our Ohio State sports content interesting.

In order to help you do that, we are offering an opportunity to send four free trial issues to potential subscribers. We will then offer your potential subscriber a very special offer to get them to join the fold of loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers.

We are also offering a special \$19.95 subscription rate for gifts for our service men and women. It's nice to send a little bit of home to those all over the world who are protecting us. Don't forget to include an APO address when applicable and remember, any subscription includes electronic access to BSB, so our Buckeyes in uniform will be able to enjoy their BSB immediately, wherever they are.

This four free trial issue offer is not good for current subscribers. This offer is to introduce readers to BSB. You can conveniently email your names and addresses to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com or mail them to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212.

OSU Football 2024 Commitments

Players in the class of 2024 who has/have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Ian Moore	OL	6-5	295	★★★★	New Palestine, Ind.
Dylan Raiola	QB	6-3	220	★★★★★	Chandler, Ariz.

accrued 84 tackles (six for loss) and three sacks in 10 games. He also played at running back for Smyrna, rushing for 1,030 yards on 154 carries – good for 6.7 yards per tote – and 19 touchdowns.

“He’s interesting because he also plays running back,” Givler said. “He’s one of those kinds of guys who does whatever his team needs and plays both ways. There’s some Steele Chambers there, quite frankly, just a guy who’s a really good high school running back as well. Maybe as a running back, he’s maybe an average athlete at the next level, at an Alabama or Ohio State, but it makes him a plus-athlete as a linebacker.

“That’s what people are seeing is he’s a pretty good running back, but you flip him on defense and he goes from being an average-to-above-average athlete as a running back to being a really good athlete as a linebacker,” he continued. “That’s kind of the way this is going now with speed and athleticism on defense vs. maybe having the 6-3, 245-pound linebackers out there. So he fits what they’re looking for from a physical profile. He’s a great student, a great kid. I

think they’re finding that out about him as well that he’s a really good kid and kind of one of those culture fits that you’re always looking for.”

Ohio State is clearly among his top programs as one of four schools with an official visit either completed or on his schedule, but Alabama is viewed as the team to beat, with 247Sports recruiting analyst Steve Wiltfong predicting Carter to the Crimson Tide.

“Alabama is a school everyone’s watching right now,” Givler said. “They’ve had him on campus several times here in the last couple of months. And just kind of with geography and everything else, you’ve got to really keep an eye on that. But the other interesting thing here, though, is I know Alabama is recruiting a lot of guys in the front seven right now and I think they’re trying to sort through some of that.

“So Ohio State may have an opportunity here, if they can really make Carter feel like a priority, to maybe pull a surprise. Right now, I think probably Alabama would have to be considered the favorite. Alabama’s probably been a kind of a childhood school that all

these kids in the South grew up watching, so you’ve got to slay that dragon a little bit.”

Wilson Locks In Visit For Michigan Game

Circling back to Wilson, the five-star defensive end announced plans to make a return visit to Ohio State on Nov. 26 for the matchup with Michigan and said he is looking forward to the atmosphere at Ohio Stadium.

“I will focus on my position, see what their roles are and how they play in the defense,” he told On3 Sports. “That will be the biggest part of the visit to the Michigan game.”

Wilson is the No. 19 overall prospect and No. 2 edge rusher in the class. He visited Ohio State over the summer and took an official visit for the season opener against Notre Dame, and Day and defensive line coach Larry Johnson visited Wilson during Ohio State’s off week.

“I like what Ohio State has in place,” Wilson said. “Everything is great with the football program, I like Ohio State outside of football and the staff is great. Getting one more look at the defense will be important to me.”

Georgia is the other school being seriously considered by Wilson, having taken several trips this fall to see the Bulldogs.

Wilson plans to commit before the early signing period begins and expects that his trip to Columbus will be his last before making a decision, a potential boost for the Buckeyes who can give Wilson one more thing to think about before his announcement.

Top 2024 DE Includes OSU In Top Schools

Ohio State landed among the top 10 schools for Buford, Ga., five-star defensive end Eddrick Houston (6-3, 255), one of the most sought-after prospects in 2024. The Buckeyes were included along with Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, LSU, Michigan State, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee and Texas.

“I chose these schools because of the community, academics, and athletics,” Houston told 247Sports. “Also these schools have been contacting me consistently since Sept. 1 (the first day schools were allowed to contact 2024 prospects) and recruiting me.”

Houston is the No. 15 overall prospect and No. 3 defensive end in the class. He visited for Ohio State’s season opener and was impressed with the Buckeyes’ defense.

“It was great just to see the energy and how electric it is when the Buckeyes play,” Houston told Eleven Warriors. “I saw great

Continued On Page 28

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago — 1987

National high school recruiting expert Tom Lemming listed some of the best defensive players Ohio State coaches were recruiting in Ohio and throughout the Midwest.

“Defensive lineman might be the most sought-after position college coaches are chasing this year,” Lemming said. “There are some good ones. If Ohio State can get the defensive linemen in Ohio, they won’t have to go to Chicago and the rest of the country to find them. If you’re an Ohio State coach, you want to make sure you bring in Ohio kids most of the time because if you don’t, you get the high school mad and the kids mad.”

The Buckeye staff had most definitely set its eyes on John Gerak from Youngstown (Ohio) Struthers. Gerak, at 6-5, 230, had great speed and quickness.

“He’s not the biggest guy in the world, but he uses every ounce to his best,” Lemming said. “He had 18 quarterback sacks last year if that gives you an idea of whether he can get by offensive linemen. He’s a good find if Ohio State can get him.”

30 Years Ago — 1992

They called Penn State “Linebacker U.” They called Miami “Quarterback U.” They called Notre Dame “Heisman U.” They called Southern Cal “Tailback U.”

Being a tackle meant none of the above for Ironton, Ohio, senior Walt DeLong. Instead, he preferred “Lineman U.”

The massive 6-7, 285-pound DeLong had given a verbal commitment to play for Ohio State, a school more conducive to his position. He became the first player to become a part of the Buckeyes’ 1993 recruiting class when he committed Nov. 12, 1992.

“That’s where I wanted to go in the first place,” DeLong said. “It’s a lineman’s school. A lot of good linemen have come from there. Plus, it’s close to home and it’s the big school around this area.”

25 Years Ago — 1997

Shaker Heights, Ohio, cornerback Nate Clements made it official over the weekend of Nov. 8, 1997, committing to Ohio State over Michigan State.

Clements (6-0, 180, 4.31) told OSU offensive coordinator Mike Jacobs of his commitment while the Buckeyes were in Minnesota.

“I guess that’s probably where I felt more comfortable,” Clements said. “I just felt like I would be better off going to Ohio State.”

As a junior, he had 11 pass breakups and four interceptions. In the 1997 season, he helped lead a young Shaker Heights squad to a 9-3 mark and a second-round playoff berth. Heights was eliminated from the playoffs with a 9-0 loss to Cleveland St. Ignatius on Nov. 15.

20 Years Ago — 2002

If he ended up being just half as successful on the gridiron

as he already had been in his young life, then defensive lineman Brandon Maupin of West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West was destined for greatness at whichever college football program he eventually chose.

“He’s a genuine All-American success story, there’s no question about it,” said Lakota West head coach Larry Cox. “Every challenge life has thrown to him, he’s overcome it. Every adversity that’s been dropped at his foot, he’s stepped over it and said, ‘I’m going to keep moving on.’ And I have no doubt that that will happen in college as well.”

To say that Maupin was on the verge of becoming a troubled adolescent would have been an understatement. His mother died when he was 6 from a seizure that was drug-related, and his dad, who wasn’t around very much when he was alive, passed away when Brandon was 14.

After a brief stint spent at Hillcrest Training School for juvenile offenders in Cincinnati, Maupin, who was reared mainly by an aunt and his grandmother in his formative years, was fortunate to transfer to Lakota West in the second semester of freshman year. He eventually came under the care of Dave and Rhonda Taldo.

“They’ve given him that structured environment that I think he needs,” said Cox of Maupin’s foster family. “Coming from obviously a looser environment, he got in with his foster parents who are retired military and they provided a little bit more of a structure for him.”

The 6-6, 280-pound Maupin was interested in Boston College, Ohio State, Pittsburgh and Tennessee.

15 Years Ago — 2007

Less than two weeks after Ohio State picked up a verbal commitment from Travis Howard (6-1, 170), a cornerback prospect from Miami Dr. Michael M. Krop, teammate Etienne Sabino spilled the beans on a poorly kept secret. He and Howard would be continuing their careers together at the next level.

During halftime of the Tennessee State-Samford game on ESPN on Nov. 8, 2007, Sabino announced his choice.

“I have decided to go to,” he said, reaching down off-camera before pulling a black OSU hat into view and onto his head, “Ohio State.”

Filmed at a studio in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., the No. 4 middle linebacker prospect in the country said that he came to the decision after a lot of time thinking and talking to his family and his coaches. The 6-3, 230-pound Sabino’s final decision came down to the Buckeyes and Southern California, but it was OSU’s history of producing top-notch linebackers that helped give the Buckeyes the edge.

10 Years Ago — 2012

A quick look at the surface of Jayme Thompson’s recruitment revealed what might look like the typical story one would come to

expect from an in-state Ohio State verbal commitment.

Despite being already pledged to West Virginia, the four-star safety received an offer from the Ohio State coaching staff in late March. Less than five days later, Thompson, a prospect out of Toledo Central Catholic, had switched his commitment. He was a Buckeye.

“I was really surprised when he committed to Ohio State,” said the prospect’s father, Deon. “He told me he wanted me to be close so I could come and watch him. That was the biggest factor for Ohio State more than anything. To me, that really touched my heart.”

Rated the No. 20 safety prospect in the 2013 class by Scout.com, the 6-2, 185-pounder had plenty of opportunities to explore. He had scholarship offers from California, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska and several others, as well as WVU.

Five Years Ago — 2017

San Marco (Calif.) Mission Hills wideout Chris Olave took his first official visit of the fall to Ohio State the weekend of Nov. 11, 2017, when the Buckeyes hosted Michigan State. OSU trounced the Spartans, 48-3, in front of a crowd of 107,011.

“The highlight of the visit for me was the game atmosphere,” Olave said. “It was unbelievable there, and to see everything in person was crazy. The place was packed all the way to the top, and being at one of the top programs in the country was a blessing. It was unreal.”

The 6-1, 170-pound wideout was the No. 905 overall recruit and No. 136 player at his position in the 247Sports composite. After receiving an offer from Ohio State on Oct. 7, he received one from Michigan (Oct. 30) and USC (Nov. 2).

Based on how Olave viewed his visit to Ohio State, it seemed there was a chance he could join L’Christian “Blue” Smith as the second wide receiver commit for the Buckeyes.

One Year Ago — 2021

Ohio State picked up a big commitment for 2023 when Pickerington (Ohio) Central five-star athlete Sonny Styles (6-4, 215) pledged to the Buckeyes on Nov. 13.

Ranked the eighth-best prospect in 2023 as well as the top safety and top recruit from Ohio, Styles joined Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star offensive lineman Joshua Padilla and Thompson’s Station (Tenn.) Independence four-star tight end Ty Lockwood as Ohio State commits for 2023.

Styles was a top target for Ohio State during the 2023 cycle, and his decision at that point was a bit of a surprise with Pickerington Central still competing in the state playoffs.

“Ohio State is just a special place,” Styles told On3 Sports recruiting analyst Jeremy Birmingham. “They offered me pretty early, like right after my first game, and I can’t forget that. They were ready to call me before I even got home.”

Recruits Show Out For Game With Indiana

Continued From Page 27

things from the different types of schemes they run and how they try to utilize their players up front. (I liked) how they can have stand-up guys and four-point guys and still be able to rush the quarterback.”

The staff clearly views Houston as a priority given that Day and safeties coach Perry Eliano visited with him during the off week. Other defensive ends being considered by the Buckeyes in 2024 include Washington (D.C.) Friendship Collegiate Academy four-star Dylan Stewart (6-4, 220) and Cincinnati Taft four-star Elias Rudolph (6-4, 220), among others.

RB Commit Fletcher Visiting Other Schools

File this one under “keep an eye on it,” but Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage four-star running back Mark Fletcher (6-1, 225), who has been committed to Ohio State since April 12, has continued taking visits to other schools throughout the fall.

He made an unofficial visit to Miami (Fla.) on Nov. 5 when the Hurricanes hosted Florida State, and he was at Florida the weekend of Nov. 12 to watch the Gators take on South Carolina. Despite being committed to Ohio State for the past seven months, communication has appeared consistent with the other schools. Day has said in the past that Ohio State’s preference – as is likely the case with most schools – is that com-

mitted prospects don’t take visits to other schools, though it isn’t black and white.

For example, Findlay, Ohio, four-star offensive lineman Luke Montgomery (6-5, 280) took a recent “visit” to Georgia, but it was only to accompany his brother, Ryan (6-3, 200), a 2025 quarterback, who was the true focus of the visit. Chandler, Ariz., five-star quarterback Dylan Raiola (6-3, 220) also took a recent visit to Nebraska, but it was accompanying his younger brother, Dayton, a 2026 quarterback who had recently received an offer from the Cornhuskers.

Obviously, though, this isn’t the case with Fletcher, who said Miami (Fla.) head coach Mario Cristobal texts him every day. Fletcher has said publicly that he is locked in with Ohio State but hasn’t turned down the Hurricanes’ advances.

“It’s just really those two,” Fletcher said in October of Ohio State and Miami (Fla.). “Those are the two talking to me. But you know, I’m still committed to Ohio State.”

There’s good reason that Fletcher – the No. 260 overall prospect and No. 15 running back in 2023 – is being heavily pursued. In 10 games this season for American Heritage, he rushed for 1,277 yards on 150 carries – good for 8.5 yards per attempt – with 13 rushing touchdowns, and also had eight receptions for 105 yards.

“A big, physically imposing back that has produced for three straight years at one of South Florida’s top NFL factories in American Heritage,” said 247Sports recruiting an-

alyst Andrew Ivins. “Owns a bit of an up-right run style, but is very difficult to bring down in the open field once he’s got a full head of steam with the combination of his size and power. He is quick to hit the hole and does a nice job of using swift cuts to evade would-be tacklers, and can also get out of trouble with a stiff arm here and there.”

SAF Downs Still In Contact With OSU

Things have been mostly quiet ever since Downs committed to Alabama in July, but Ohio State has continued working behind the scenes to try to flip the five-star prospect. He took an official visit to Ohio State on June 24 (as well as to Georgia on June 3, Notre Dame on June 10 and Alabama on June 18) but it wasn’t enough to secure his commitment, as he pledged to the Crimson Tide a month later.

He has yet to return to Columbus, but rumors have swirled that the staff is attempting to get him on campus on Nov. 26 to watch the Buckeyes take on Michigan in what should be an exciting atmosphere. There’s reason to believe Ohio State may be able to get the visit scheduled, as Downs’ father, Gary, told On3 Sports that there’s a lot to like about Ohio State.

“They’ve been a top-five program consistently year after year,” he said. “Being in the national championship picture, they develop a lot of first-round draft picks in the secondary. We like Coach Day. Obviously, we just met Coach Knowles this past year. Seeing the things he does over the years with the defense he came from, Ohio State is much improved on defense this year.”

“Ohio State has an all-around program, from player development to academics to the football side. They’re recruiting, and we’ll see where that goes.”

Another reason to believe that Downs may be open to a visit is that he took a recent trip to Georgia on Nov. 5. While a trip to Athens, Ga., to watch a matchup between then-No.1 Tennessee and No. 2 Georgia does not directly correlate to a return visit to Ohio State, it means he’s at least open to visits outside of Alabama at this point in the process.

Ohio State should be working hard to secure his services, as he is the No. 10 overall prospect and the No. 1 safety in 2023. The Buckeyes have commitments at safety from West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Malik Hartford (6-3, 175), Cocoa, Fla., four-star Cedrick Hawkins (6-0, 175) and Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter’s Prep four-star Jayden Bonus (6-1, 210).

Visitor List Ends Up Large For Indiana Game

Heading into the week of the Indiana game, the visitor list for Ohio State wasn’t particularly notable. There were some highlights, including the official visit for Carter, but the list itself remained small relative to some other games this season.

That changed as the game approached, and Ohio State ended up hosting an impressive group of recruits, both in terms of quantity and quality.

Beginning in 2023, the Buckeyes – in addition to Carter – hosted several commitments in Montgomery; Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star offensive lineman Joshua Padilla (6-4, 280); Middletown (Ohio) Lakota East four-star offensive lineman Austin Sierewald (6-5, 320); Dublin (Ohio) Coffman four-star defensive lineman Will Smith Jr. (6-3, 260); and Cincinnati Winton Woods four-star cornerback Jermaine Mathews (6-0, 175).

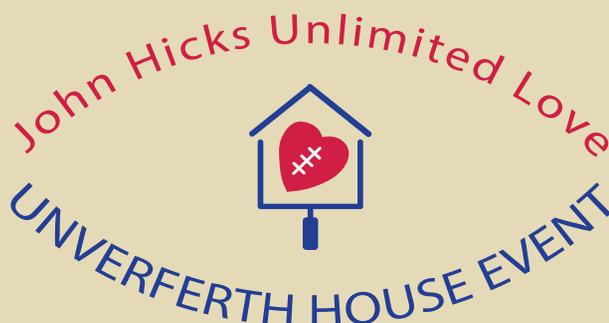
In 2024, Ohio State played host to several notable candidates in West Bloomfield, Mich., four-star defensive lineman Brandon Davis-Swain (6-4, 240), who is committed to Notre Dame; Peculiar (Mo.) Raymore four-star tight end Jaden Reddell (6-5, 225); Bloomington (Ind.) North three-star tight end Aidan Steinfeldt (6-5, 235); Bolingbrook, Ill., four-star athlete l’Marion Stewart (6-1, 180); and Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut four-star linebacker/safety Garrett Stover (6-2, 195).

A trio of prospects from 2025 visited, including Alpharetta, Ga., four-star tight end Ethan Barbour (6-3, 215); Westerville (Ohio) North offensive lineman Jake Cook (6-5, 295); and Bellefontaine, Ohio, quarterback Tavien St. Clair (6-3, 190). Some 2026 prospects also got in on the action, with Galena (Ohio) Olentangy Orange quarterback Levi Davis (6-0, 167); Augusta (Ga.) Christian Schools wide receiver Aaron Gregory (6-1, 159); Cincinnati West Clermont wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. (6-3, 170); and West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West athlete Cam Thomas (6-1, 190) all making an appearance.

OHSAA Playoffs Roll On

The Ohio High School Athletic Association playoffs continued into their third week on Nov. 11, with several schools featuring Ohio State commitments and targets still playing deep into the season.

Winners from Nov. 11 will play again on Nov. 18 with the opportunity to advance to the state semifinals in their respective divisions and regions.



“JJ, will you help me help people who really need help?” -John Hicks

DINNER, SPORTS TALK, AUCTION & ENTERTAINMENT

NOVEMBER 22, 2022
6-9 P.M.

Villa Milano Banquet Center
1630 Schrock Road, Columbus, OH 43229

PRESENTED IN PART BY




HONORING THE 2002 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

FEATURED SPEAKER: COACH JIM TRESSEL

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

<p style="text-align: center;">\$25,000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">National Champion Sponsor (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name/logo on/in website, all social media, printed materials, table signs, video screens and stage mention by emcee. • Preferred VIP seating for 30 (3 tables) • Name displayed at tables 	<p style="text-align: center;">\$10,000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Big Ten Champion Sponsor (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name/logo recognition on all printed materials in advance of event and on printed program • Name/logo featured on screen and verbally onstage by Emcee • Preferred VIP seating for 20 guests (2 tables) • Name displayed at tables 	<p style="text-align: center;">\$5,000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Scarlet and Gray Sponsor (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name recognition on program • Preferred seating for 10 • Name displayed at table
<p style="text-align: center;">\$1,500</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table for 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name displayed at table 		
<p style="text-align: center;">\$150</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Individual tickets</p>		

For more information, or to make a contribution to our fund at The Ohio State University, or to receive President’s Club benefits please contact: Ann Carmichael • Unverferth House Director 614-294-2969 • unverferthouse@att.net

TOPSOIL

VERY RICH PULVERIZED OR UNPULVERIZED “SOIL PLUS”

BLENDED SOIL WITH SAND and ORGANIC COMPOST
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
CRUSHED LIMESTONE, WASHED SAND & GRAVEL

ANY SIZE LOAD • IMMEDIATE DELIVERY ANYWHERE

Buy Where the Professionals Do • Delivered on Time - Every Time, It Doesn’t Cost Any More!

Columbus’ Largest

JONES FUEL COMPANY

350 Frank Road • 443-4611 • 1-800-TOPSOIL
www.jonestopsoil.com

ASK AN ANALYST

With Marc Givler of Buckeye Huddle

You were in Philadelphia recently to watch Philadelphia Roman Catholic four-star wide receiver Tyseer Denmark (5-11, 180). If he does commit to Ohio State on Nov. 24, what are the Buckeyes getting in the 2024 prospect?

"He's very similar to a lot of the guys they've recruited recently, guys like Jaxon Smith-Njigba, and even Garrett Wilson to an extent, in terms of guys who can play inside and outside as receivers, can play in the slot and play outside. I think he's probably going to be a slot guy with the versatility to play outside vs. an outside guy with the versatility to play in the slot.

"He's got great feet, very quick, very explosive, uses his quickness and route running to separate. He's probably not a 4.3 (40-yard dash) guy or anything like that, but he's, again, more quick and fast. So he's got a little bit of Jaxon Smith-Njigba there. They haven't done this a lot recently, but he does have a little bit of Curtis Samuel in him too, where he can line up in the backfield. They do some wildcat with him, they give it to him on jet sweeps, things like that. He's one of those guys who returns kicks. He's one of those guys where you just get the ball in his hands and make things happen. He has great hands, a great natural pass-catcher. And he's just a tough guy on the run after the catch. Again, he's not super physically imposing, but he runs hard after the catch, and he's not easy to bring down.

"So he's kind of a versatile, offensive playmaker, and I think he's definitely one of the better receivers in the class. 2024 is actually a really strong receiver class. I know, some folks are like, 'Well, he's only the 16th receiver in the country.' First of all, that's pretty good on its own anyway. But second of all, it's a very deep receiver class. I suspect he'll continue to kind of establish himself as one of the better guys."

What, if anything, are you hearing on a potential trip

for the Michigan game for Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek five-star safety Caleb Downs (6-0, 185)? Does him taking a visit to Georgia on Nov. 5 while committed to Alabama increase those chances, or does it mean the 2023 prospect is likely to stay in the SEC?

"Well, I certainly think the idea that he visited Georgia gives you some optimism that Ohio State can get him on campus, because that's been the thing really the last two months as well: 'He's not visiting anywhere, so how can you make this happen if he's not going to visit?' and 'Will he visit?' and all that good stuff.

"Then he does visit Georgia. So once he's done that – and make no mistake, Georgia is Alabama's biggest recruiting rival and biggest rival on the field right now – any blowback that he might get from Alabama for doing that, you don't have to worry about that. Now, if you're Ohio State, he's already done something that's going to cause more frustration from Alabama. We'll see.

"It's going to be very telling if he shows up at the Ohio State-Michigan game (on Nov. 26) because that is the Iron Bowl weekend, of course. I think that would be a lot more symbolic of a gesture than going to see a top-three matchup there with Georgia-Tennessee that's right down the road from him, as Alabama played on the road that weekend.

"But obviously, that's what Ohio State is pushing for. There have been rumblings about this happening that I've been hearing for several weeks now. They have not committed to that, the family hasn't. They even kind of mentioned maybe trying to go to Alabama for the Iron Bowl. We will see, but I think it's a very realistic possibility, to put it that way."

Who are some 2024 prospects that may not be well-known right now that could be household names this time

next year?

"I don't know if the Ohio guys, right now, are getting as much national respect as they deserve. There are a couple of them. Springfield four-star cornerback Aaron Scott (6-1, 170), I think he's a top-100 player, he may even be a top-50 player nationally. I don't think he's getting a lot of that right now from all the different recruiting sites. He's a 6-0 corner that can cover, hit. He's got great ball skills, and great competitiveness. Aaron's a really good student, so he kind of checks all the boxes there. That's a guy that I think we start talking about him as maybe even being the best player in Ohio, and I don't know if he's getting that type of respect right now.

"Another guy that I like from Ohio that I don't know if he's quite getting national recognition either is Sunbury Big Walnut four-star linebacker/safety Garrett Stover (6-2, 195), who is obviously Cade's cousin. He's always around the football. He has great sideline-to-sideline speed. He played safety last year at Big Walnut, he's playing linebacker this year and has made an almost seamless transition to that position already with one more year of high school left after this one. So that's encouraging.

"I think these are guys that even Ohio State fans probably aren't as excited about as they should be. And two guys that could very well – actually I expect to – end up at Ohio State when it's all said and done. I think those two are kind of floating, for some reason, and I can't really put my finger on it. Aaron Scott plays on one of the best programs in Ohio. Garrett has Cade as a cousin, who was a very highly ranked prospect. So I'm not quite sure what the disconnect has been so far with that, but I think those are two guys who will only continue to increase their ranking and their profiles nationally."

Division I, Region 2: No. 3 Centerville (10-3) vs. No. 2 Springfield (11-1): Springfield rolled to an easy victory over Centerville, taking home a 42-14 victory behind quarterback Bryce Schondelmyer's 312 yards and four passing touchdowns.

The Wildcats' defense, boosted by four-star cornerback Aaron Scott (6-1, 170), an Ohio State target in 2024, allowed a first-quarter touchdown by Centerville but then toughened up, not allowing another score in the first half as the Wildcats took a 28-7 lead going into the locker room.

Centerville scored again in the third to threaten a comeback, but Springfield added another pair of touchdowns in the fourth to ice the game. Four-star wide receiver Anthony Brown (5-10, 170), who is committed to Kentucky, finished with six catches for 177 yards and a pair of scores.

Division I, Region 4: No. 3 Lakota West (13-0) vs. No. 2 Cincinnati Elder (10-3): Lakota West moved to 13-0 on the season, knocking off Elder 30-10 behind a strong defensive performance.

The Firebirds' defense – led by Hartford – allowed just 197 total yards and held Elder to just 2 of 10 on third down. They jumped out to a 13-3 lead at the half and added 17 more points in the second half while holding Elder to just a touchdown in the final two quarters.

Division II, Region 7: No. 5 Big Walnut (10-3) vs. No. 1 Massillon Washington (11-1): The season came to an end for Big Walnut and Stover when the Golden Eagles fell 42-21 to Washington.

Big Walnut returned the opening kickoff 90 yards for a touchdown courtesy of Nate Severs and forced an interception on the ensuing drive, converting the turnover into a field goal for a 9-0 lead.

It didn't take long for Washington to establish a rhythm, though, quickly working to a 15-9 lead with 10:37 left in the second quarter after scoring on back-to-back possessions, and it never lost the lead from that point.

Division II, Region 8: No. 4 Kings Mills (12-1) vs. No. 1 Winton Woods (12-1): Winton Woods suffered the lone upset of the weekend, suffering a 23-16 defeat to Kings Mills.

The Knights punched Winton Woods in the mouth early, taking a 17-7 lead after the first quarter and adding a second-quarter field goal for a 20-7 lead at the half. The Warriors had more success on offense in the second half but were unable to complete the comeback. This was the first loss of the season for Winton Woods, for which the campaign came to an end for Mathews.

Division IV, Region 14: No. 4 Elyria Catholic (10-3) vs. No. 1 Glenville (12-0): Glenville's undefeated run continued as the Tarblooders knocked off Elyria in a 54-7 decision. Glenville's win was due in part to forcing five turnovers, taking advantage to earn a 34-7 lead at the half.

The defense – which features four-star cornerback Bryce West (5-11, 177), an Ohio State target in 2024 – allowed just one touchdown, which came in the second quarter. Glenville quarterback Deonte Rucker finished 7 of 11 for 125 yards and two touchdowns, one of which was a 45-yarder to four-star tight end Damarion Witten (6-4, 215), another 2024 target for the Buckeyes.

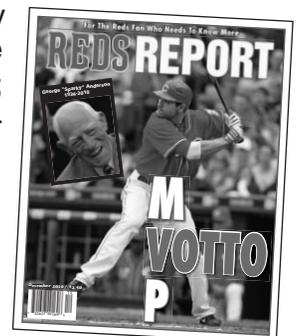
For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB subscribers.

REDS FANS!

Follow The Reds Year-Round In Reds Report

Reds Report is must reading for every Reds fan. Each information-filled issue includes player features; historical articles; extensive minor-league coverage with features on top prospects, complete statistics and farm club updates; box scores and game summaries for every Reds game; complete team and individual statistics; a Reds memorabilia section and much more.

1 Year (12 issues) — \$45.95



Send to: Reds Report • P.O. Box 12453 • Columbus, Ohio 43212

- Please send me a one-year (12 issues) subscription to **Reds Report** for \$44.95.
- My check or money order is enclosed. Check # _____
- Charge to my: Discover MC Visa AMEX

Exp. Date _____

Card No. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

For Faster Service On Credit Card Orders Call

1-800-760-2862

Ohio State Adds Four On Signing Day

All four of Ohio State's 2023 commits put ink on their national letters of intent on Nov. 9, affirming their pact with the Buckeyes and head coach Chris Holtmann.

COURT REPORT Jack Emerson

Riding the momentum of signing a top-10 class during the 2022 cycle, Holtmann took it one step further in 2023, capturing the fifth-best class in the nation. With Minneapolis Totino-Grace four-star combo guard Taison Chatman (6-4, 175), Wichita (Kan.) Sunrise Christian four-star small forward Scotty Middleton (6-7, 190), Pickerington (Ohio) Central four-star small-forward Devin Royal (6-6, 210) and St. Marys (Ohio) Memorial three-star center Austin Parks (6-10, 250) in the fold, Holtmann emphasized that this group pushes the program's increasing attention to versatility forward.

"Obviously, it's an exciting day for us given that we've assembled a really exciting recruiting class," Holtmann said. "It's a really exceptional class on paper, but more importantly, I think it's another really good class. It's back-to-back really good classes that I think fit us, fit our program, fit the kind of versatility and size that we're looking to add.

"We're really excited about Devin, Scotty, Austin and Taison. We have a diverse group in terms of their skill sets and how they fit each other, and backing that up with the current freshman class we have here is exciting for us, for sure."

Starting with the longest committed member of the class, Parks was highly sought after by several Big Ten teams prior to landing with the Buckeyes, as Illinois, Indiana and Michigan State all extended offers his way. Holtmann emphasized the

need for a big body to man the paint and said the Buckeyes built their class around the Ohio-based big man, trying to find pieces that fit with his skill set in the paint.

"Austin was really important for us," Holtmann said. "Basically the whole Big Ten was recruiting him. He's a big kid, so he was really important for us. He kind of anchored us, but we felt like we needed to add to it with some versatile pieces and special guys."

Joining Parks in the frontcourt is the forward duo of Royal and Middleton. Royal committed on Aug. 3, and Middletown joined him in the class just four days later. They boast differing skill sets on the wing, with Royal more of a scoring machine while Middleton serves as a defensive pest on the perimeter, but Holtmann believes that they can share the floor at any given time.

"I think you'll see them play together," Holtmann said. "Scotty has the ability to be an elite defender and we're going to need that, but also his offensive game has continued to grow. He brings competitiveness to him.

"We've been recruiting Devin for a couple of years, but his growth was really obvious to us," he continued. "He just kept getting better. It's a credit to him and his work ethic. He's a wonderful kid, and we really loved getting to know him – obviously a guy in your back yard that you create a relationship with. He's going to be a really good offensive player. He's going to be a really good player in general, but he brings a real offensive skill set."

Chatman was the final addition to the Buckeyes' class, announcing his commitment to the program on Sept. 20, just 18 days following his official visit to Columbus. The Minneapolis native provides the Buckeyes with a level of versatility in the backcourt as someone who can play both on and off the ball. Holtmann noted that Chatman fits into the overall versatility they're trying to build within the program.

"Once we realized we had a chance to get a player like Taison, who we felt like could add to us as a point/combo (guard), we were really excited about that possibility," Holtmann said. "Taison we felt like just added to a really good class."

Sueing Impresses In Return To Action

It was a long road back to the court for Justice Sueing.

The Ohio State senior forward had not played in an organized basketball game in 360 days prior to the Buckeyes' season-opening win over Robert Morris, but Sueing appeared to be right back to form against the Colonials despite the long time away from the floor.

Sueing dazzled the 9,141 Buckeye fans who descended on the Schottenstein Center by scoring a game-high 20 points – nearly reaching his best mark as a Buckeye, which sits at 22 against Illinois on March 14, 2020 – while adding a pair of rebounds and assists along with a trio of steals.

Just prior to tip-off, Sueing bowed his head for a brief prayer before looking up and letting out a roar – a signal that he was ready for war. Sueing appeared to be back at full strength, and he reflected on his journey back to the court and how it felt to be

OSU Men's Basketball Signed Commitments

Players in the class of 2023 who have signed to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Taison Chatman	G	6-4	170	★★★★	Minneapolis Totino-Grace
Scotty Middleton	SF	6-6	180	★★★★	Wichita (Kan.) Sunrise Christian
Austin Parks	C	6-9	240	★★★	Saint Mary's (Ohio) Memorial
Devin Royal	SF	6-7	210	★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) Central

back in scarlet and gray.

"It was really emotional," Sueing said. "I talked to my pops before this, just talking about how God put me through these couple of hurdles I had to deal with over this past year. It built me to be stronger as a man and as a player.

"It was just a quick little prayer to thank God," he continued. "Then, I yelled at the goal to get hyped and I was right into it."

Sueing was, by far, the most impactful Buckeye to see the floor on Nov. 7, keying Ohio State's 29-13 run to close the first half, cashing in on a pair of threes to extend OSU's lead to eight points with 6:29 to go in the opening frame.

The second half was more of the same for Sueing, as he hit four of his six shot attempts in the frame. While Sueing impressed for much of the evening, his most noteworthy play came on one of his last of the contest. With the Buckeyes up 69-44 and under nine minutes remaining, the Colonials swung the ball along the perimeter, trying to find an avenue to score, but Sueing diagnosed the play and jumped in front of a pass before corralling the loose ball and going the distance for an easy breakaway slam.

Although Sueing showed out in a big way for the Buckeyes, Holtmann stressed patience for him going forward, noting there are still areas he needs to get stronger in as he gets re-acclimated to the grind of college basketball.

"He's going to have some rust that he's going to have to shake off," Holtmann said. We saw that in the (closed-door) scrimmage. He was just rusty in spots. Tonight, it was hard to notice. He was pretty clean in a lot of ways.

"I thought he had a really clean game, limited his turnovers (two). He has to be a guy defensively that we can count on."

Although Sueing came up with just two rebounds against the Colonials – one offensive and one defensive – Holtmann stressed that he is going to be a vital part of the Buckeyes' efforts on the glass this season.

"The addition of Justice really helps on both ends," Holtmann said. "We really miss his rebounding when he's not there. I think he's as good of a rebounder as there is at the wing position in the country, so we really miss it. He's just so physical and has great hands."

As the Buckeyes began their quest for their first Big Ten title and Sweet 16 appearance under Holtmann, Sueing emphasized that he felt at ease being on the court with teammates and was ecstatic to be able to make an impact on this Ohio State team again.

"I just finally felt comfortable to be out there healthy with these guys," Sueing said. "I know we worked really hard these past couple of weeks, past couple of months, really since the summertime to get here. Now that the season is actually here, we're going to take it one day at a time, but I'm glad we were able to take this one tonight."

2022-23 OSU Men's Basketball Schedule

Date	Opponent
Nov. 1	Chaminade (Exh.) W, 101-57
Nov. 7	Robert Morris W, 91-57
Nov. 10	Charleston Southern W, 82-56
Nov. 16	Eastern Illinois
Nov. 21	at San Diego State ^
Nov. 22	at Cincinnati/Arizona ^
Nov. 23	at TBA ^
Nov. 30	Duke*
Dec. 3	St. Francis
Dec. 8	Rutgers
Dec. 17	at North Carolina \$
Dec. 21	Maine
Dec. 29	Alabama A&M
Jan. 1	at Northwestern
Jan. 5	Purdue
Jan. 8	at Maryland
Jan. 12	Minnesota
Jan. 15	at Rutgers
Jan. 18	at Nebraska
Jan. 21	Iowa
Jan. 24	at Illinois
Jan. 28	at Indiana
Feb. 2	Wisconsin
Feb. 5	at Michigan
Feb. 9	Northwestern
Feb. 12	Michigan State
Feb. 16	at Iowa
Feb. 19	at Purdue
Feb. 23	Penn State
Feb. 26	Illinois
March 1	Maryland
March 6	at Michigan State

^ - Maui Invitational

* - Big Ten/ACC Challenge

\$ - CBS Sports Classic at New York

Holtmann Touches On Attendance Woes

Ohio State's wins over Robert Morris and Charleston Southern received the two lowest attendance marks (not counting the 2020-21 season when fans were unable to attend games) since Holtmann took over as head coach in 2017. Respective crowds of 9,141 and 8,409 took in those games at Value City Arena. The previous low under Holtmann stood at 9,472, which came in an 85-74 win against Towson on Dec. 8, 2021.

There are several factors that may give an indication as to why the attendance numbers have dipped so low, as the quality of opponents as well as uncertainty revolving around the new-look roster may be among the culprits. However, Holtmann is not worried about the dwindling attendance numbers and pointed to the fact that student tickets sold out in near-record time during the preseason.

"I loved our students (against Robert Morris)," Holtmann said. "I thought our students were phenomenal. Our focus is really controlling, putting a team on the floor, a product on the floor that people will enjoy watching. I think as they familiarize themselves with our team, they certainly will."



Train to be the **BEST** you can be!
Designing fitness programs to meet your personal needs.

Personal Training

Group Fitness Training

Sports Specific Training

Owned and Operated By:

Brent Johnson

614-570-9918

B-fit.training@hotmail.com

Located at 2378 East Main Street in Bexley, Ohio

Buckeyes Tip Off Season With Pair Of Wins

By JACK EMERSON

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ohio State men's basketball team saw 11 Buckeyes make their program debuts while jumping out to a 2-0 start on the season with runaway wins over Robert Morris and Charleston Southern.

Junior forward Zed Key stepped into his increased role with ease, posting a pair of double-doubles in Ohio State's first two games. The Buckeyes also enjoyed the return of forward Justice Sueing into the lineup after he missed nearly all of last season with an abdominal injury.

Transfer guard Isaac Likekele introduced himself to Ohio State fans as a stat-sheet stuffer, while freshman forward Brice Sensabaugh showcased his scoring prowess by reaching double figures in each game.

In Ohio State's season opener, the Buckeyes dialed it up from three, connecting on 47.6 percent (10 of 21) of their attempts from distance, to rout Robert Morris 91-53 on Nov. 7 before 9,141 in Value City Arena.

In the game's first eight minutes, the Buckeyes (1-0) looked like a team still adjusting to playing with one another, falling into an early 15-13 hole with 11:40 remaining in the opening frame as turnovers and de-



SONNY BROCKWAY

KEYING A WIN — Ohio State junior forward Zed Key lifted the Buckeyes to a pair of victories over Robert Morris and Charleston Southern to open the season by producing a double-double in each game.

fensive miscues plagued them. From there, however, things clicked for Ohio State. The Buckeyes scored on baskets from Likekele and Sueing and cashed a trio of threes — drilled by Key, Roddy Gayle Jr. and Sueing — to take a 26-19 lead at the 7:49 mark.

Sueing — who played in his first game since Nov. 12, 2021 — sparked a 29-13 run to close the first half after the early deficit, scoring 12 of his 20 points during the opening frame. The Honolulu native helped spur Ohio State's three-point marksmanship, finishing the evening 2 of 3 from beyond the arc. Sueing also provided the Buckeyes with hounding on-ball defense, leading OSU with three steals.

"It was great seeing Justice out there," head coach Chris Holtmann said. "We've seen him for a while behind closed doors, in the private scrimmage, but it was great for our fans to see him and see what he's capable of, and remember what he's capable of. He's a really good player."

Sueing's three-point shooting was matched by an unlikely Buckeye. Key also tallied a pair of triples during the opening frame, hitting his first two attempts, including Ohio State's first bucket of the season. Key produced his double-double with 13 points while leading the Buckeyes with 10 rebounds.

"I worked on (shooting) a lot this year," Key said. "During the summertime, it was one of my main goals, to be able to add a three-point shot to my game. Every day with Coach (Jake) Diebler, Coach Holtmann and the rest of the staff, they believed in me and they want me to shoot."

Key and Sueing led Ohio State's second-half efforts, combining for 15 points as OSU outscored the Colonials 49-25 during the final frame. Robert Morris (0-1) was never closer than 13 in the final 20 minutes, and the Buckeyes used 60.0 percent shooting (18 of 30) in the half to pull away.

Likekele was a standout among the freshmen and transfers, tallying nine points, nine rebounds and six assists, along with a pair of steals. Fellow transfer guards Tanner Holden and Sean McNeil added 12 and six

points, respectively.

As for the five freshmen, Sensabaugh led the first-year Buckeyes in scoring with 17 points. He added nine rebounds with an assist and a steal.

Although Ohio State made life difficult for the Colonials for much of the evening, Robert Morris guard Enoch Cheeks was a bright spot, scoring 17 points on 7-of-15 shooting. Cheeks was the only Colonial to hit multiple threes, finishing with three makes from distance. Robert Morris was just 4 of 24 from beyond the arc (16.7 percent).

Following the win, Holtmann said he was pleased with how his young team handled the pressure.

"This was a good opening night for us, to be able to experience playing against a veteran group like Robert Morris," Holtmann said. "This was a good opportunity for us to go against a physical team that's well-coached and that has some athleticism."

Bucks Buck Buccaneers

Key finished with his second consecutive double-double, scoring 17 points and corraling 13 rebounds as Ohio State (2-0) cruised past Charleston Southern 82-56 at Value City Arena on Nov. 10, with 8,409 in attendance.

Key was off and running from the opening whistle, scoring Ohio State's first six points and sparking an 11-0 run, corraling three offensive rebounds in that span, and the Buckeyes led 11-2 at the 16:09 mark.

Ohio State then utilized a 17-1 run in the middle stages of the first half to run away from the Buccaneers (1-1). The burst, capped by an old-fashioned three-point play from Sensabaugh, gave the Buckeyes a 30-7 lead with 8:07 to play before intermission.

Key completed his double-double with 2:01 remaining in the first half with a defensive rebound, helping the Buckeyes to a 46-22 lead heading into the locker room. He had 13 points on 6-of-7 shooting in the half to go with 10 rebounds.

"The start of the game, with Zed's physicality, was really important," Holtmann said after the win. "I thought Zed was great on the glass, (grabbed) almost every loose ball and really set a tone early that I think gave our team a real lift."

Despite the slow start, Charleston Southern found some success during the second half as it settled into an offensive rhythm and hit 38.2 percent of its shots (13 of 34) in the frame, up from its 29.0 percent mark (9 of 31) in the first half. The Buckeyes outscored the Buccaneers only 36-34 in the second half, largely attributed to Ohio State's waning defensive effort during the final 20 minutes of action. Charleston Southern, however, was unable to get closer than 23 points.

"For us, we really want to focus on just sustaining our effort throughout the whole game," Sensabaugh said. "(Holtmann) mentioned that. The second half of the game was a close game. If you reset it to 0-0, it would have been a close game. So sustaining our effort and keep finishing possessions, getting stops like that, and kills, is going to be something that is important for us moving on."

Sueing remained a hot hand for the Buckeyes, scoring 11 points. Sensabaugh

Ohio State 82, Charleston So. 56

Nov. 10, 2022
Value City Arena, Columbus, Ohio

	1	2	F
Charleston So. (1-1)	22	34	56
Ohio State (2-0)	46	36	82

	Charleston So Total						
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Bryan	24	1-6	0-0	3-2	0	0	2
Chavez	28	5-10	0-0	0-1	0	1	13
Kelly	26	4-7	3-6	2-3	1	1	11
Johnson	23	1-11	2-2	0-3	2	3	4
Faye	34	1-5	0-0	1-2	0	4	3
Harris	29	6-16	0-0	0-1	3	2	12
Dodd	4	0-0	0-0	1-0	0	0	0
Duhart	16	2-5	0-0	3-1	0	0	4
Berry	16	2-5	2-2	1-3	0	2	7
Totals	200	22-65	7-10	11-17	6	13	56

Percentages: FG: 33.8%. FT: 70.0%. **Three-point field goals:** 5-22 (Chavez 3-7, Faye 1-3, Berry 1-3, Bryan 0-2, Johnson 0-2, Harris 0-4, Duhart 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 28. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Kelly, Harris). **Turnovers:** 9 (Bryan 2, Kelly 2, Chavez, Johnson, Faye, Harris, Berry). **Steals:** 3 (Bryan, Chavez, Duhart).

	Ohio State Total						
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Thornton	23	2-3	4-4	0-0	2	0	8
McNeil	24	5-10	1-1	3-3	0	0	13
Likekele	24	2-4	0-1	1-4	4	1	4
Seeing	21	3-7	5-5	1-2	1	0	11
Key	21	8-10	1-1	6-7	1	1	17
Holden	19	0-2	2-2	0-5	2	3	2
Gayle	20	3-5	2-2	0-1	1	3	9
Sensabaugh	18	6-12	1-2	1-3	0	0	14
Hardman	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Etzler	5	0-1	0-0	0-3	0	1	0
Okra	19	1-4	0-0	1-3	0	2	2
Spencer	4	1-2	0-0	1-1	0	0	2
Totals	200	31-60	16-18	14-33	11	11	82

Percentages: FG: 51.7%. FT: 88.9%. **Three-point field goals:** 4-15 (McNeil 2-5, Gayle 1-1, Sensabaugh 1-3, Thornton 0-1, Sueing 0-3, Holden 0-1, Etzler 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 47. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Gayle, Okpara). **Turnovers:** 14 (Holden 4, Gayle 2, Sensabaugh 2, Thornton, McNeil, Likekele, Sueing, Key, Etzler, Okpara). **Steals:** 2 (McNeil, Okpara). **Officials:** Dorsey, Kitts, Barlow. **Attendance:** 8,409.

followed up his 17-point outing against the Colonials with 14 points on 6-of-12 shooting in the win over the Buccaneers.

McNeil also reached double figures, finishing with 13 points while also being the only Buckeye to hit multiple three-point attempts (2 of 5).

Key was imperative to the Buckeyes' 50-20 advantage in the paint, scoring nearly all of his points in the lane. Not only did Key impact Ohio State's dominance inside, but he also gave the Buckeyes a lift on the offensive glass, corraling six of Ohio State's 14 offensive boards. Ohio State turned those offensive rebounds into 18 second-chance points, of which Key produced eight. In total, the Buckeyes outrebounded the Buccaneers 47-28.

"We put in a lot of hard work during the summer, in the preseason, in practice and the weight room, just to be able to be in shape to sustain that effort," Key said. "I found myself getting tired a little bit, but I was able to push through it and keep going. I'm trying to do that for the whole season, just come out with that fire. It sets the tone."

Charleston Southern was led by guard Tahlik Chavez, who tallied 13 points while hitting on 5 of 10 attempts from the field. Guard Claudell Harris Jr. added 12 points on 6-of-16 shooting while dishing out three assists.

Ohio State was scheduled to return to action on Nov. 16, closing out its three-game homestand against Eastern Illinois.

Ohio State 91, Robert Morris 53

Nov. 7, 2022
Value City Arena, Columbus, Ohio

	1	2	F
Robert Morris (0-1)	28	25	53
Ohio State (1-0)	42	49	91

	Robert Morris Total						
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Spear	27	3-8	1-6	3-2	0	2	7
Walker	23	4-8	2-4	4-2	0	3	10
Cheeks	33	7-15	0-0	0-2	0	2	17
Last	20	1-5	1-1	2-4	0	4	3
Corbin	35	1-12	0-0	0-0	2	1	2
Mayers	19	1-2	3-4	1-1	2	2	5
Ford	17	1-3	0-0	0-1	2	0	2
Wainwright	15	1-5	2-2	0-1	0	1	5
Martina	5	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Jeffries	2	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0
Frascone	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
O'Grady	2	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	2
Arvanitis	2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	200	20-63	9-17	13-14	6	16	53

Percentages: FG: 31.7%. FT: 52.9%. **Three-point field goals:** 4-24 (Cheeks 3-7, Wainwright 1-3, Spear 0-2, Walker 0-3, Last 0-1, Corbin 0-6, Martina 0-1, Arvanitis 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 27. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Cheeks). **Turnovers:** 11 (Last 3, Cheeks 2, Spear 1, Walker 1, Mayers 1, Ford 1, Wainwright 1). **Steals:** 5 (Spear, Last, Mayers, Ford, Frasccone).

	Ohio State Total						
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Sueing	24	8-14	2-4	1-1	2	0	20
Key	21	4-5	3-6	4-6	0	2	13
Thornton	24	1-4	0-0	0-2	4	1	3
McNeil	24	2-5	0-0	0-0	2	2	6
Likekele	30	4-9	1-2	2-7	6	1	9
Holden	18	5-5	1-1	1-2	0	1	12
Sensabaugh	18	5-8	6-8	2-7	1	2	17
Okra	13	2-3	0-0	0-2	0	2	4
Gayle	14	3-5	0-0	1-2	3	2	7
Etzler	4	0-1	0-0	0-2	0	1	0
Hardman	4	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Baumann	3	0-0	0-0	1-0	0	0	0
Spencer	3	0-1	0-0	1-0	0	0	0
Totals	200	34-61	13-21	14-34	18	14	91

Percentages: FG: 55.7%. FT: 61.9%. **Three-point field goals:** 10-21 (Sueing 2-3, Key 2-3, McNeil 2-3, Thornton 1-2, Holden 1-1, Sensabaugh 1-4, Gayle 1-2, Likekele 0-1, Etzler 0-1, Hardman 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 48. **Blocked shots:** 5 (Likekele 2, Sueing, McNeil, Okpara). **Turnovers:** 14 (Sensabaugh 3, Sueing 2, Thornton 2, Key, Likekele, Holden, Gayle, Etzler, Spencer). **Steals:** 6 (Sueing 3, Likekele, Sensabaugh). **Officials:** Green, Chittum, McJunkins. **Attendance:** 9,141.

McMahon Providing Spark For Ohio State

When Ohio State trotted out its starting five for the exhibition against Notre Dame College on Oct. 31, it wasn't much of a surprise to see freshman forward Cotie McMahon in that group. It provided an opportunity for her to see extensive time on the court – she finished with 20:20 on the floor, second most behind guard Madison Greene's 20:38 – and for the coaching staff to learn what they might have with the first-year player.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Braden Moles

She impressed in that brief outing, finishing 4 of 7 from the floor for nine points and dishing out six assists. Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff said after the game, though, that the starting lineup – which also featured forward Rebeka Mikulášiková and guards Taylor Mikesell, Jacy Sheldon and Taylor Thierry – may not be one to stay.

"There's a lot of different lineups we could start for a lot of reasons," he said. "I think this year, it could be a season where lineups are based on matchups and so forth. But we have a lot of players that can play, so it gives us a lot of options."

As it turns out, that was the exact lineup that hit the floor when Ohio State tipped off against Tennessee on Nov. 8, a game in which the Buckeyes came back from a 12-point deficit to knock off the Volunteers by an 87-75 final margin. McMahon, despite having yet to play in college in any official capacity, earned the start in her first career game, no less against a top-five opponent in Tennessee.

It wasn't initially smooth sailing for McMahon, as she was called for an offensive foul, had two turnovers and was issued another foul less than four minutes into the contest, causing her to hit the bench. Left to

OSU Women's Basketball Signed Commitments

Players in the class of 2023 who have signed to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the ESPN rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Faith Carson	C	6-4	NA	Buchanan, Mich.
Diana Collins	PG	5-9	★★★★	Snellville (Ga.) Brookwood

stew for the remainder of the first quarter, McMahon re-entered the game to start the second quarter and scored the first basket of her career on a fast break.

"We all make mistakes on the court, but it's just a matter of what you do after you make that mistake," she said. "If you make a mistake, you know what you need to do in order to eliminate that mistake, so I feel like I did what needed to be done and it was kind of like a scratch out."

Just a few possessions later, she hit again from the field, and she later stole the ball from Tennessee guard Jasmine Powell and made her way up the court for the score.

"I was definitely antsy at the beginning, but after hitting those shots, it was like my confidence just got right back to where it needed to be," McMahon said. "That really helped a lot."

After picking up her third foul, McMahon missed most of the third quarter – one in which the Buckeyes finished with a 63-54 lead after trailing 41-33 at the half – but joined the action in the fourth, facing less pressure with a lead for Ohio State. She scored the first two baskets of the frame for the Buckeyes to help increase the lead, and she finished the game 5 of 6 from the field with 10 points and a pair of steals, both of which led to points.

As a result of the win, the 6,402 fans in attendance at Value City Arena stormed the court to celebrate just the 12th win in program history over a team ranked in the top five of the AP top 25 poll.

"Being my first game as a freshman and seeing that for the first time ever, the crowd storming for a women's basketball game, is

crazy," McMahon said. "Honestly, it's something that I wanted to experience and I did, so I'm really happy I got to experience that."

While Ohio State's starting lineups this season may be more in flux than in recent seasons, there's no reason to believe that McMahon, with the promise she showed against a top-five opponent, can't continue to be a mainstay in the starting five.

"She's got an incredible amount of talent," McGuff said. "We continue to invest in her (and) she's only going to get better. She's still got to get some experience, because you saw some spectacular plays and flashes of brilliance and things that could be coming in the future, but at the same time, you saw some youthful mistakes that hopefully as she gets more experience she can take care of those."

As for those mistakes – three turnovers and four personal fouls – McGuff said she is quick to forget them, though he added with a laugh that she perhaps is too quick to forget them.

"That's to her personality," he said. "She forgets her mistakes very quickly, which is sometimes to the chagrin of her coach."

While McGuff credited McMahon's mental fortitude for helping her through her first start, she credited the team's veterans for helping prepare her for the moment.

"They've been behind me since I got here," she said. "I obviously wasn't very confident coming in, but they definitely helped me out a lot, made me realize my strengths more. They always talk me up and everything, motivate me to do what I know how to do."

Mikesell, Sheldon Named To Naismith Watch List

Mikesell and Sheldon – referred to as the "Splash Sisters" in Ohio State's media guide – have both been named to the watch list for the Naismith Trophy Women's College Player of the Year. The duo are two of 50 players to make the list, of which the Big Ten leads with 10 candidates for the honor.

Sheldon led Ohio State in scoring last season with 19.7 points per game and was named an AP All-American honorable mention as well as an All-Big Ten first-team selection. Heading into this year, Sheldon was a unanimous selection for the preseason All-Big Ten team by the coaches and media.

While Mikesell did not lead the team in scoring, she did lead the Buckeyes in shooting 47.5 percent from beyond the arc, a mark which ranked second in the nation. She was named to the preseason All-Big Ten team by the conference's coaches and was also named to the preseason watch list for the Ann Meyers-Drysdale Award, given annually to the top shooting guard in the country.

She showed out in Ohio State's win over Tennessee, finishing with a game-high 25 points on 9-of-18 shooting from the field, including 4 of 10 from deep. It was the 12th

2022-23 OSU Women's Basketball Schedule

Date	Opponent
Oct. 31	Notre Dame College (Exh.) W, 108-33
Nov. 8	Tennessee W, 87-75
Nov. 13	at Boston College W, 82-64
Nov. 17	at Ohio
Nov. 20	McNeese State
Nov. 23	Wright State
Nov. 27	North Alabama
Nov. 30	at Louisville*
Dec. 4	at Rutgers
Dec. 8	New Hampshire
Dec. 11	Michigan State
Dec. 16	UAlbany
Dec. 20	at South Florida ^
Dec. 21	at Arkansas/Oregon ^
Dec. 28	at Northwestern
Dec. 31	Michigan
Jan. 5	at Minnesota
Jan. 8	Illinois
Jan. 14	at Nebraska
Jan. 19	Northwestern
Jan. 23	Iowa
Jan. 26	at Indiana
Jan. 29	Purdue
Feb. 1	at Wisconsin
Feb. 5	at Maryland
Feb. 8	Minnesota
Feb. 13	Indiana
Feb. 16	at Penn State
Feb. 20	at Michigan
Feb. 24	Maryland

^ - San Diego Invitational
* - Big Ten/ACC Challenge

20-point game of her Ohio State career and extended her streak of consecutive games with at least one three-pointer to 81 games, with the last 33 coming with the Buckeyes.

The list for the Naismith Trophy will be whittled down to 30 players in early January and then down to 10 semifinalists in early March, followed by the announcement of four finalists on March 21 with the winner to be revealed on March 29.

Carson, Collins Sign With OSU

Snellville (Ga.) Brookwood four-star point guard Diana Collins (5-10) and Buchanan, Mich., center Faith Carson (6-4), a pair of 2023 prospects, both signed their letters of intent to play for Ohio State on Nov. 10.

Collins is the No. 70 overall prospect in the class, according to ESPN. She was previously committed to Georgia but opened her recruitment back up this past spring, eventually settling on Ohio State on Sept. 16. She averaged 21.5 points, 5.3 rebounds and 2.7 steals per game last season for Brookwood.

Carson, who averaged 15.3 points, 10.5 rebounds and 3.7 blocks as a sophomore, committed to Ohio State back in February.

As for the recruiting targets touched on in the last issue, London (Ontario, Can.) Southwest Academy center Jada Bediako (6-3) committed to Georgia Tech on Nov. 10. Jacksonville (Fla.) Sandalwood center Jada Jones (6-4), Atlantic City, N.J., four-star center Quanirah Cherry-Montague (6-4) and Haddonfield (N.J.) Paul IV five-star point guard Hannah Hidalgo (5-7) were all also reportedly considering Ohio State but have yet to announce a school.

Tickets To Events Anywhere

Concerts • Theatre • Sporting Events



"Your Ticket Solution"



(614) 488-9957 • 888-842-5877

www.ticketsohio.com

1350 W. Fifth Ave., Ste. 24

We Buy OSU Football Tickets!

OSU Football & Basketball
Cleveland Browns
Blue Jackets
Nationwide Arena
Schottenstein Arena
NFL • NBA • NHL

Ohio State Rocky Tops Tennessee In Opener

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Despite facing one of the more challenging nonconference slates in recent history, Ohio State opened the season with a pair of wins, coming back to upset a top-five opponent in Tennessee at home and then going on the road to take down Boston College.

In the season opener at Value City Arena on Nov. 8, the Buckeyes knocked off the then-No. 5 Volunteers 87-75, utilizing a strong defensive performance to help turn the tide after facing an eight-point deficit at the half.

The Buckeyes' press helped to force 29 turnovers (with 16 steals) that resulted in 37 points, and even with the Volunteers shooting 48.3 percent for the game, Ohio State was able to outscore Tennessee 54-34 in the final two quarters – including an 18-0 run spanning late in the third into the fourth – despite being out rebounded 40-30 for the game.

"The game went kind of the way we wanted," said Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff. "We wanted to make it up-tempo, we wanted to press them to speed them up and not let them get comfortable in the half court, and I thought we were doing that."

"We just weren't making shots in the first half so we couldn't get into the press enough, and then we weren't putting enough points on the board."

As McGuff alluded to, the first two quarters were mostly dominated by Tennessee. The Volunteers held a 22-16 lead after the first quarter and increased it to 41-33 at the half after leading by as many as 12 points.

Ohio State shot poorly from the field in the first half – just 38.7 percent (12 of 31) – and were a miserable 50.0 percent from the free-throw line, connecting on just 8 of 16 attempts. It was the defense that helped the Buckeyes tread water, though, forcing 12 turnovers in the first two quarters that resulted in 14 points.

"It wasn't like we weren't playing," McGuff said. "We just weren't making shots and things weren't going as well as it could have. But we came out, we got ourselves together at halftime and didn't let that first half really sink us. So that showed great leadership and mental toughness for our players."

The second half was a complete reversal of fortune, as the Buckeyes came out of the locker room and found a groove as well as their shot. Guard Taylor Mikesell hit her first triple of the game to make it 47-42, and forward Rebeka Mikulášiková later scored on back-to-back possessions to tie the game up at 49 with 4:07 remaining in the quarter. Tennessee's next points came courtesy of guard Jordan Horston, a Columbus native, who connected on a jumper and knocked down three free throws to make it 54-51 with 2:40 to go in the third, but these would be the last points scored by the Volunteers for over four minutes.

Back-to-back baskets by Mikesell (a jumper and a three-pointer) gave Ohio State its first lead of the game, and it began an 18-0 run for the Buckeyes that stretched from 2:24 left in the third frame to 8:36 remaining in the fourth and ended with a 69-54 lead for Ohio State. During the run, Ohio State was 7 of 10 from the field and forced six turnovers by the Volunteers, who had just one shot attempt and missed a pair of free throws during that span.

"It started on defense for us," Mikesell said. "I think we settled down a little bit on defense and finally started getting some stops and then got some easy looks, and then shots started falling in there. But we weren't really pressing to make shots. We know we have a lot of people that can score, and at the end of the day, making shots was not going to be our issue – it was going to be getting stops."

Ohio State continued piling on in the fourth, outscoring the Volunteers 24-21 in the frame and forcing six turnovers en route to the 87-75 final. After the final buzzer sounded, many of the 6,402 fans in attendance stormed the floor at Value City Arena.

"I don't think I've ever seen a court storm for a women's basketball game before, and being a part of it was awesome," Mikesell said. "The crowd was incredible, so shout-out to Columbus."

Mikesell led the Buckeyes with 25 points on 9-of-18 shooting, including a 4-of-10 clip from deep. Mikulášiková added 17 points and nine rebounds, while Sheldon finished with 14 points and a career-high eight steals. Horston led the Volunteers with 20 points and 13 rebounds.

"It does set a tone for us (with) the building blocks and where we want to go," Mikesell said. "We ended on a really high note last year. I think we have an unbelievable ceiling – unlimited, if you will – to take it to where we want to take it."

This was just the second win ever by Ohio State against Tennessee and the first since Dec. 17, 1981. It was the 12th win in program history against an AP top-five team.

Sheldon's Double-Double Leads OSU Past BC

If Sheldon wasn't already on the radar of WNBA scouts entering this season, her performance in Ohio State's 82-64 win at Boston College on Nov. 13 has almost certainly cemented her name among the league's brass.

Sheldon picked up a double-double on points and steals, finishing with 14 points on 7-of-14 shooting and a career-high 11 steals, the fourth-career double-double for the Dublin, Ohio, native, as the Buckeyes forced 36 turnovers from the Eagles, resulting in 39 points in a game played before 1,022. Through two games this season, Ohio State has produced 76 points off 65 turnovers.

While the final was a dominant result for Ohio State, the Buckeyes let Boston College (1-2) hang around early, holding just a 17-16 advantage despite forcing 10 first-quarter turnovers. The Buckeyes were sloppy with the ball as well, turning it over six times during the frame, and shot just 38.9 percent from the field (7 of 18) in the first 10 minutes.



SONNY BROCKWAY

DEFENSE TO OFFENSE – The Ohio State women's basketball team has hounded its opponents with a devastating full-court press during its first two games this season, forcing 65 turnovers which have turned into 76 points for the Buckeyes.

The uncontrolled play stretched into the second quarter, as the teams combined for six turnovers – three by each squad – in the first four minutes. The Eagles eventually took a 22-21 lead on a layup by Andrea Daley at 6:06 following a turnover by Ohio State guard Madison Greene, but a triple from Mikesell kick-started a 21-3 run to close the half for the Buckeyes, who went into the locker room with a 42-25 lead.

During that run, the Buckeyes were 8 of 10 from the field and forced seven turnovers, offering no reprieve for the Eagles who had no answers for Ohio State's deadly press.

Ohio State (2-0) kept the pressure up in the second half, never letting the deficit reach fewer than 12 points and seeing the lead grow to as many as 25 points at times. The Buckeyes forced 16 turnovers and shot 44.4 percent (16 of 36) from the field in the final two quarters for the 82-64 final.

Sheldon's 11 steals ties an Ohio State record, and is the most since former Ohio State guard Lisa Cline stole the ball 11 times in a game at UCLA on Dec. 30, 1988.

Ohio State was also boosted against the Eagles by Mikulášiková, who notched her fourth career double-double with a game-high 23 points and 10 rebounds. Greene also flirted with a double-double, finishing with eight points and nine assists, while Mikesell (16 points) and guard Taylor Thierry (10 points) also reached double digits. Boston College center Maria Gakdeng led the Eagles with 13 points, while guard Dontavia Waggoner had nine points and 13 rebounds.

The Buckeyes were scheduled to stay on the road to face Ohio on Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. and return home to take on McNeese State on Nov. 20 at 1 p.m.

Ohio State 87, Tennessee 75

Nov. 8, 2022
Value City Arena, Columbus, Ohio

	1	2	3	4	F
Tennessee	22	19	13	21	75
Ohio State	16	17	30	24	87

	Total	FT	Reb.	A			PF	Pts.
				M	A	O-D		
Jackson	25	4-9	1-4	2-4	0	4	9	
Key	12	4-7	0-1	2-1	0	4	8	
Walker	26	3-7	0-0	2-2	2	5	6	
Powell	36	7-12	4-5	0-1	4	2	19	
Horston	34	6-13	8-10	3-10	4	2	20	
Franklin	10	0-2	2-2	0-1	0	3	2	
Darby	23	3-6	0-0	0-2	0	3	9	
Puckett	7	0-1	0-0	1-2	0	0	0	
Hollingshead	14	1-1	0-2	1-3	0	4	2	
Suarez	8	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0	
Miles	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	
Totals	200	25-58	15-24	12-28	10	28	75	

Percentages: FG: 48.3%. FT: 62.5%. **Three-point field goals:** 4-11 (Darby 3-5, Powell 1-3, Horston 0-1, Puckett 0-1, Walker 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 4. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Hollingshead). **Turnovers:** 29 (Horston 7, Jackson 5, Powell 5, Walker 3, Hollingshead 2, Key 2, Darby, Miles, Suarez). **Steals:** 4 (Hollingshead, Horston, Powell, Walker).

Ohio State	Total	FT	Reb.	A			PF	Pts.
				M	A	O-D		
Mikulášiková	37	6-14	3-6	1-8	3	2	17	
McMahon	19	5-6	0-1	0-0	0	4	10	
Thierry	21	5-5	0-2	1-3	2	5	10	
Sheldon	39	4-12	5-6	0-4	7	4	14	
Mikesell	32	9-18	3-4	0-1	0	1	25	
Harris	12	0-0	3-4	0-1	0	2	3	
Greene	22	2-3	3-6	2-1	4	4	7	
Walker	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	
Bristow	2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	
Shumate	12	0-1	1-2	1-1	3	1	1	
Totals	200	31-61	18-31	7-23	19	24	87	

Percentages: FG: 50.8%. FT: 58.1%. **Three-point field goals:** 7-23 (Mikesell 4-10, Mikulášiková 2-8, Sheldon 1-4, Shumate 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 6. **Blocked shots:** 3 (Shumate 3). **Turnovers:** 15 (McMahon 3, Sheldon 3, Greene 2, Mikulášiková 2, Thierry 2, Bristow, Harris, Walker). **Steals:** 16 (Sheldon 8, Greene 3, McMahon 2, Mikesell 2, Mikulášiková). **Officials:** Cross, Grinter, McConnell. **Attendance:** 6,402.

Ohio State 82, Boston College 64

Nov. 13, 2022
Conte Forum, Boston, Mass.

	1	2	3	4	F
Ohio State	17	25	22	18	82
Boston College	16	9	20	19	64

Ohio State	Total	FT	Reb.	A			PF	Pts.
				M	A	O-D		
Thierry	24	5-10	0-2	3-2	0	3	10	
Sheldon	34	7-14	0-0	1-2	3	2	14	
Mikulášiková	34	9-13	2-2	2-8	3	3	23	
Mikesell	32	5-12	4-4	0-1	2	2	16	
McMahon	15	1-4	1-2	2-1	1	1	3	
Greene	28	3-6	1-2	2-2	9	3	8	
Harris	15	2-5	1-2	0-2	2	2	6	
Bristow	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	
Shumate	11	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	1	2	
Walker	6	0-4	0-0	1-0	1	0	0	
Totals	200	33-70	9-14	13-19	21	18	82	

Percentages: FG: 47.1%. FT: 64.3%. **Three-point field goals:** 7-21 (Mikulášiková 3-4, Mikesell 2-6, Greene 1-2, Harris 1-3, Sheldon 0-4, Shumate 0-1, Thierry 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 3. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Shumate). **Turnovers:** 23 (Sheldon 5, Greene 4, Mikulášiková 4, McMahon 3, Mikesell 3, Thierry 3, Harris). **Steals:** 20 (Sheldon 11, Thierry 3, Greene 2, Shumate 2, McMahon, Mikulášiková).

Boston Coll.	Total	FT	Reb.	A			PF	Pts.
				M	A	O-D		
Lacey	21	4-8	2-2	2-2	1	4	11	
Gakdeng	30	6-7	1-2	4-1	1	3	13	
Mair	40	3-8	0-0	0-2	10	1	7	
Waggoner	32	3-14	3-4	4-9	0	3	9	
Todd	35	4-11	2-2	1-4	2	4	10	
McGee	1	0-0	1-2	0-1	0	0	1	
VanTimmeren	17	1-3	0-0	2-0	0	0	2	
Lezama	1	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	
Daley	22	4-8	3-4	1-6	1	1	11	
Carman	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	
Totals	200	25-60	12-16	17-26	15	16	64	

Percentages: FG: 41.7%. FT: 75.0%. **Three-point field goals:** 2-9 (Lacey 1-3, Mair 1-2, Lezama 0-1, Todd 0-3). **Team rebounds:** 4. **Blocked shots:** 9 (Gakdeng 4, Daley 2, VanTimmeren 2, Waggoner). **Turnovers:** 36 (Mair 8, Daley 7, Gakdeng 6, Team 4, Todd 4, VanTimmeren 3, Lacey 2, Waggoner 2). **Steals:** 15 (Waggoner 6, Lacey 3, Mair 3, Daley, Gakdeng, Todd). **Officials:** Lukanich, Esho, Enterline. **Attendance:** 1,022.

Ohio State Seeks Return To Title Contention

By **ANDY ANDERS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State wrestling may be coming off its worst team finish at the national championships in 10 years, but all signs indicate the Buckeyes should only be getting better.

Last season was the first that featured athletes getting an extra year of eligibility through the COVID-19 waiver, and it left the Buckeyes a year behind others in terms of its roster seniority as most of their top competitors were juniors, while other top collegiate programs were featuring arsenals of fifth- and sixth-year wrestlers. Now, a bevy of seniors – bolstered by the nation's No. 1 recruiting class in 2022 – look to return Ohio State to the heights it enjoyed in the mid- to late-2010s.

“(Our seniors) are just in a really, really good spot mentally,” said Ohio State assistant coach J Jagers. “When you're young, you can almost overthink the seriousness of this. And it is serious. It's our livelihood. I love it. I eat, sleep and drink wrestling. Our team does too. But at the end of the day, it's wrestling. You've just got to go out there and have fun, be grateful for the opportunity and compete.”

Ohio State's been competitive ever since head coach Tom Ryan took over the program in 2006, finishing no worse than sixth at the NCAA team championships every season from the 2011-12 campaign through 2018-19. The Buckeyes won their first-ever national title in 2014 and captured Big Ten crowns in 2014, 2016 and 2017.

The Buckeyes haven't returned to that peak since, however. Last season culminated in a fourth-place finish in the Big Ten and a 13th-place mark at the NCAAs, the worst for the program since the 2010-11 season.

The squad's No. 4 ranking in the first National Wrestling Coaches Association poll of the season indicates a better year could be in store, though it never helps hardware collection to compete in what has arguably been the best conference in collegiate



FILE PHOTO

SASSO STUNNED – Ohio State's 149-pound wrestler, Sammy Sasso, entered the season as the No. 2-ranked wrestler in his weight class. Sasso finished as an NCAA runner-up in 2020-21.

wrestling for some time. The Big Ten has produced the country's team national champion each of the past 15 years, with Penn State winning nine of the past 11 NCAA titles. Minnesota and Iowa each have won the sport's top prize in addition to the Buckeyes and Nittany Lions within that 15-year span.

“We didn't just get put into the Big Ten,” Jagers said. “That's every year, man,”

The team is off to a strong start for the 2022-23 season, with five wrestlers winning individual championships in their respective open divisions at the Michigan State Open on Nov. 5. Three more underclassmen took home titles in freshman/sophomore divisions.

“A couple of guys made the comment last week that they were so excited to grab somebody else besides the same four, five, six guys in their weight class,” Jagers said of the Michigan State Open. “I thought the weekend went really well. Obviously a lot of the talk and hype was highlighted by Jesse (Mendez's) win, but I think our upperclassmen got us going.”

Ohio State proceeded to defeat then-No. 14 Virginia Tech in the two sides' dual meet Nov. 4, downing the Hokies 18-13 at the Covelli Center in Columbus.

With the season under way, Buckeye Sports Bulletin is breaking down every weight class for Ohio State. All InterMat rankings for wrestlers are from the Nov. 8 rankings, and match results are as of Nov. 11.

125 pounds – Returning at 125 pounds for Ohio State this season is senior Malik

Heinselman, ranked the No. 11 wrestler in his division by InterMat. Heinselman holds a 79-38 career record with the Buckeyes, including a career-best 21-7 tally in the 2021-22 season.

Entering the NCAA championships as the 12th seed in his division this past year, Heinselman left the winner's bracket earlier than expected after a 7-2 first-round loss to Utah Valley's Taylor LaMont, the 21st seed. He responded with a decision over Korbin Meink but was fully eliminated in the second round of wrestlebacks. In four NCAA qualifications, Heinselman has yet to advance past that stage, and he's taking steps to change that.

“I've just been working on putting together multiple moves from neutral, getting a single (leg takedown) down, perfecting my high-crotch (takedown) again, getting that front-hand lock down,” Heinselman said. “Then also perfecting top-bottom.”

Heinselman has started the 2022-23 campaign hot, taking first place at the Michigan State Open with a win over No. 14 Joey Prata of Oklahoma State in the championship round. He beat redshirt freshman Andre Gonzales, who can compete at 125 or 133 pounds for OSU, in the team's wrestle-offs by a 3-2 decision.

Senior Brady Koontz and freshman Brendan McCrone represent the team's options behind Gonzales and Heinselman. Koontz defeated McCrone 5-3 in the preliminary rounds of wrestle-offs, but McCrone did win the freshman/sophomore division

at 125 in the Open.

133 pounds – One of two newcomers in Ohio State's starting lineup checks in at 133 pounds, a freshman who's generating buzz mere weeks into his Buckeye career. Such comes with the territory of being the No. 1 pound-for-pound recruit in one's class, per FloWrestling.

His name is Jesse Mendez, and he's a four-time Indiana state champion at three different weight classes, just the 10th wrestler in state history to take home a title each of his four years. He posted a 157-1 record in high school.

“Jesse, he's a competitor,” Jagers said. “Midsummer when he's like, ‘I don't need a redshirt, I want to go now’ – it's a July workout and you're like, ‘Oh, really?’ The boy is pumped up, but he believes in himself. He believes he's going to win the nationals this year. People will call him crazy and laugh at him, but that's what he believes. And there's nothing that I don't think he can do.”

Ohio State fans who weren't already on notice about Mendez received quick word after he pinned redshirt senior Dylan Koontz just 58 seconds into their bout at wrestle-offs.

The following week, Mendez took the mat at the Michigan State Open and rattled off four wins to take the title at 133 pounds, including a 3-2 decision over Illinois' Lucas Byrd, a two-time All-American, in the championship match. At the time, Byrd was the No. 5 wrestler in the country at 133 pounds.

“A lot of it is work ethic,” Mendez said. “I feel like at a young age I came in and always had a good work ethic. Just the way I go about things, being a student of the sport, has helped me get to where I am.”

Mendez was tabbed as Big Ten Wrestler of the Week for his efforts at the Open and jumped from unranked to No. 11 in the InterMat rankings, a gargantuan leap considering 33 wrestlers make the list.

“I think throughout the years, the work I've put in, I feel like I'm one of the top 133-pounders in the country,” Mendez said. “A lot of people doubt me, but they can keep doubting me.”

In addition to both Koontz brothers, another stellar freshman backs up Mendez at 133 pounds in Nic Bouzakis, ranked right behind the Indiana native as the No. 2 pound-for-pound recruit in FloWrestling's ratings. Bouzakis won the freshman/sophomore division at 133 pounds at the Michigan State Open.

Following his victory, Bouzakis put on a red beanie, a tradition of his after wins. The beanie reads “Team Greco” in honor of his late brother Greco Roman Bouzakis, who passed away from brain cancer at the age of 6. Ryan's been through a similar tragedy in his life, losing his 5-year-old son, Teague, to a sudden heart attack in 2004.

“I've been watching him put that on a lot, because he wins a lot,” Jagers said with a laugh. “When he wins events he puts that on. Even when he was really young, before we could even recruit him, watching him and I was well aware of his story, and the connection with Coach Ryan as well, suffering some heartache. There's a connection there with those two.”

141 pounds – Though he had to pull out of the Michigan State Open with an injury



TIM SWANSON
Certified Personal Trainer

Flat Stomach • Weight Loss • Strength Training • Cardio Kick-Boxing • Boot Camp

614-886-9331
foreverfitswan@yahoo.com

You Can Count On These Services From

THE QUICKPRINT CENTRE

1350 W. 5th Ave., Suite 14, Columbus, OH 43212
614-488-2683 • FAX 614-488-0059 • qpoh@aol.com

Offset-Printing
Typesetting
NCR Forms
Laminating
Brochures

Digital Color Copies
Ship UPS
Fax Service
Announcements
Wedding Invitations

Digital B&W Copies
Rubber Stamps
Business Cards
Binding
Labels

OHIO STATE WRESTLING

and missed the team's dual meet with Virginia Tech, No. 7 Dylan D'Emilio remains Ohio State's man at 141 pounds.

Senior Jordan Decatur had competed at 133 pounds prior to this season, but after missing the majority of 2021-22 with a foot injury, he bumped up to 141. Decatur defeated D'Emilio at wrestle-offs by a 4-3 decision and registered a third-place finish at the Michigan State Open, his lone loss coming to Michigan's Pat Nolan. He was wrestling unattached – which allows a wrestler to compete while redshirting – and D'Emilio should resume his role as OSU's starter upon his return.

"Wrestle-offs, they're definitely a data point that we're going to use," Jagers said. "You get your depth chart sorted out a little bit, but we also have to weigh how you compete against the field."

Decatur's rehab process was an arduous one. The jump in weight class did help a touch, however, and he enjoyed eating the occasional snack with the loosened diet restrictions.

"That was a dark period for me," Decatur said. "I've never really had an injury to that degree. So that was kind of tough for me to sit on the sidelines and watch practice, watch what the guys were going through and not be able to go through it myself. So I think a lot of it was just getting that mental edge, maturing in that stance."

Decatur holds a 20-17 career record at Ohio State to D'Emilio's 32-21. D'Emilio has qualified twice for the NCAA championships, making it as far as the third round of wrestlebacks in 2021.

With Decatur and D'Emilio both out with injuries against Virginia Tech, Bouzakis bumped up a weight class and wrestled at 141 pounds for OSU. An NCAA rule added in 2022 allows for freshmen to wrestle in five "days of competition" and still maintain their redshirt. Bouzakis fell to No. 16 Tom Cook 14-6.

149 pounds – Perhaps the most important cog in the Ohio State wrestling machine this season comes at 149 pounds, the weight class of senior Sammy Sasso, the No. 2-ranked wrestler who finished as an NCAA runner-up in 2020-21. Following that finish, Sasso slipped, though it wasn't far as he still wound up fifth at the NCAA championships last year. That result drove him throughout the offseason.

"I didn't wrestle to the best of my ability at the end of last season," Sasso said. "If you lose matches because a guy is better than you, that's all right. But losing because you're holding back is another thing."

While Sasso intends to compete for a national championship, his weight class is ruled by Cornell's Gianni Diakomihalis. Cornell canceled winter sports due to COVID-19 for the 2020-21 season, but he's won the NCAA championship in each of the other three years he's been active with the Big Red, including last year's crown. Diakomihalis held a 75-match winning streak entering the season and won a silver medal from this year's world championships.

"I'm sure when you lay your head down at night, you're wrestling the national tournament in your head a lot," Jagers said. "But (Sasso) doesn't really talk about that guy, like one guy or this guy or that guy much at all. Sammy's got a really good head for this, for wrestling. He's realistic and he knows who he is and doesn't get fearful of anything or

worried about a match that's on the horizon."

Sasso is much more to Ohio State than the first name after Diakomihalis' in wrestling rankings, however. Last year he won both the team's Most Valuable Wrestler award and its Ray Mendoza Leadership Award, named for a former Ohio State wrestler who lost his life serving in Iraq.

"He's been so consistent and a constant of our program for the past couple years," Jagers said. "People take him for granted. You can't (as a program), you don't want to do that. I thought his performance (in the Michigan State Open) was as good as we've seen him. He's had some good performances, but just the style in which he was wrestling, he was sprinting from the opening whistle."

Sasso swept through the Open with three wins by pin and one win by technical fall, including a first-round pin of Central Michigan's Johnny Lovett, the No. 13 wrestler at 149 pounds, to claim the title.



Paddy Gallagher

"I don't have a lot of time here and I don't want to waste any matches," Sasso said. "Every time I compete, I want it to be the best version of myself. And it's not just about me. I represent the program.

I want kids at home watching, when they watch me wrestle, they watch me and say, 'I want to be a Buckeye.'" Other 149-pounders for the Buckeyes include junior Klay Reeves and freshman Gavin Brown, who can wrestle at either 149 or 157 pounds.

157 pounds – The second of two newcomers to Ohio State's starting lineup wrestles at 157 pounds – redshirt freshman Paddy Gallagher. Gallagher lands at No. 22 in InterMat's rankings for the division.

Gallagher signed with the Buckeyes' 2021 recruiting class to much fanfare, ranked the No. 1 pound-for-pound wrestler in the country by both MatScouts and FloWrestling. He won two state titles at 160 pounds in Ohio and twice won the Mark Zimmer Award as the most outstanding wrestler in the state.

In 2019, he captured a Junior Fargo National Championship, and he followed it up with another title in 2020 at FloWrestling's Who's No. 1 championships. After a redshirt season in 2021, the soft-spoken Gallagher is ready to start meeting that hype.

"I've been looking forward to it for a really long time," Gallagher said. "Now it's finally here, and I've been waiting. The redshirt season was super lonely and kind of boring. So now I'm here and I'm ready to go."

The Chesterland, Ohio, native went 17-3 in his first season wrestling unattached. The separation that comes with being off the active roster was difficult to bear, but Gallagher tried to make the most of it.

"Just figuring out rides to tournaments by yourself, all your friends are doing their own thing," Gallagher said. "Everyone's doing their own thing, so it's just kind of boring, a little bit."

At the Michigan State Open, Gallagher pushed all the way through to the championship match, defeating No. 31 Corbyn Munson of Central Michigan by technical fall in the semifinals. He lost in the championship round, but it took a sudden victory in overtime for Northwestern's Trevor Chumbley,

the No. 20 wrestler at 157 pounds, to put him away.

"I told (Gallagher) this yesterday, 'You have all the ingredients, you're just not mixing them right at times,'" Jagers said. "Once he figures it out, Buckeye fans will be really happy."

Junior Isaac Wilcox, whom Gallagher beat by a 4-1 score at wrestle-offs, backs up the redshirt freshman at 157 pounds. Wilcox has a 4-5 career record at Ohio State with a 15-7 record wrestling unattached.

165 pounds – Every single wrestler starting for Ohio State at the 165-pound weight class and higher was an All-American in either of the last two seasons. That starts with redshirt junior Carson Kharchla, the No. 6 wrestler in the country at 165 pounds.

Kharchla posted a 25-5 record in the 2021-22 campaign with a 10-0 record in dual meets, culminating in a seventh-place finish at the NCAA championships. He earned some team-wide recognition for his efforts, dubbed the Chris Ford Freshman of the Year.

"Last year was my first season competing even though I've been here for a while," said Kharchla, who posted a 16-0 record wrestling unattached in 2019-20 and missed the 2020-21 season. "I've been able to look at those matches and see what I need to improve and get better at, just figure out college wrestling, as they say. College is different than freestyle. It's different than the world circuit."

Kharchla didn't hit the mat for the Michigan State Open, but defeated No. 29 Connor Brady 3-1. Junior Bryce Hepner, with a career 7-6 record for the Buckeyes, actually beat him at wrestle-offs by a 2-1 decision. That hasn't shaken the staff's confidence in Kharchla, however.

"Bryce did a really good job," Jagers said. "He competed really hard against Carson and wrestled the match that he had to to win. Carson's got to get a little more urgency on his finishes – maybe not his best performance. Not to take anything away from Bryce, but (Carson) was seventh in the country last year. And Bryce is striving to get to that level of consistency."

174 pounds – Decatur wasn't the only wrestler to bump up a class for the Buckeyes as senior Ethan Smith made the jump to 174 following a 23-7 campaign at 165 last season. Smith has a fifth-place finish in the 2021 NCAA championships on his résumé, as well.

For Smith, who is ranked No. 6 in his division, improving from the top and bottom positions has been at the top of his list during the run-up to the season. Teammates call him "Grundy," a nickname he's had for several years due to his time living in Grundy, Va.

"(Gavin Hoffman) and I have spent a lot of mornings doing bottom work, as well as top," Smith said. "That's probably my biggest kryptonite, definitely, is getting out from the bottom and then keeping guys down when I need to. Other than that, I think the biggest thing for me is emotional control."

Smith captured two ranked victories at the Michigan State Open, with a 3-1 decision over No. 16 Ed Ruth in the semifinals and a 10-5 victory over No. 23 Troy Fisher in the finals.

Redshirt freshman Bryer Hall waits in the wings for the Buckeyes behind Smith at 174 pounds. Hall won a high school state championship at Aurora (Ind.) East Central in 2021.

184 pounds – No wrestler on Ohio State's roster has been there as long as redshirt senior Kaleb Romero, the nation's No. 4 wrestler at 184 pounds. He's been with the program since the 2017-18 season and holds a 63-25 career record.

Romero went 4-3 at the NCAA championships last season, earning his first All-American honor in the process, finishing sixth. At this stage of his collegiate career, Romero's focus is mostly on fine-tuning small details in his approach and staying healthy this year having dealt with some injuries in the past.

"It's hard to stay healthy when you're 36 years old," Romero, 24, said with a laugh. "(The main thing is) attacking my strengths. That's something me and the coaches have been talking about. As long

Continued On Page 36

Hank's
TEXAS BBQ
EST. 2020

**House-made
Pastrami Reuben
Sandwiches
THURSDAYS
while they last!**

*Clintonville's
Smokin' New Spot*

**Slow-Smoked
Southern Goodness!**

Texas style BBQ

- full menu
- full bar and service
- late night happy hour
- catering & events

**2941 N. High Street
(614) 972-6020**
HanksTexasStyleBBQ.com

Mon: Closed
Tues - Thurs: 11:30 am - 10 pm
Fri - Sat: 11:30 am - 11 pm
Sun: 11:30 am - 9 pm

BUZZER TRIVIA
Wednesdays 8PM

FREE TO PLAY! WIN PRIZES

Seniors Provide Heavyweight Leadership

Continued From Page 35

as a lot of us have been in college, you're not going to learn a whole lot more wrestling in a few months. So right now, I'm just making sure my conditioning is where it needs to be, my strength is where it needs to be, then in wrestling, attacking where I'm strong at."

Romero was the last Ohio State wrestler to win his division at the Michigan State Open, picking up two major decisions and a tech fall en route to the championship match, where he picked up a 12-5 win over No. 14 Matt Finesilver of Michigan.

Sophomore Gavin Bell fills in behind Romero in the division. Bell has wrestled in just three official matches at Ohio State but holds a 12-6 record from his time wrestling unattached during the 2021-22 season.

197 pounds – A select few individual results and the team itself may have been disappointing at last year's NCAA championships, but the same could not be said for redshirt senior Gavin Hoffman.

Hoffman entered the championships as the 21st seed at 197 pounds, expected to make an early exit. Instead he handed 12th-seeded Tanner Sloan (San Diego State) a 6-4 defeat in sudden victory, slayed fifth-seeded Nino Bonaccorsi (Pittsburgh)

with another 6-4 sudden victory win and completed a third straight upset when he knocked off 13th-seeded Jake Woodley (Oklahoma) 5-3.

Eventual national champion Max Dean finally ended Hoffman's Cinderella run in the semifinals. The Montoursville, Penn., native lost back-to-back matches from there to land in sixth place for the tournament, still an All-America finish for a wrestler who wasn't supposed to reach that spot.

"I wouldn't call it a sigh of relief because I always knew I was capable of this, but this does solidify on paper that I belong," Hoffman said in April. "In my head, I always believed I was a top guy, but now that I made the NCAA semis, it's a good feeling that I'm a threat to be a contender next year."

Hoffman opened this year's campaign as the No. 9 wrestler at 197 pounds, though that ranking did slip to No. 14 after a loss to Illinois' Zac Braunagel, who was previously ranked No. 14 in the weight class, in the championship round of the Michigan State Open.

Romero coined the nickname "Sarge" for Hoffman after he showed up for practice one day with a buzzcut when the two were underclassmen.

Two Ohio State freshmen, Luke Geog and Seth Shumate, took first and second, respectively, in the freshman/sophomore

division at 197 pounds in the Open. Geog defeated Shumate 6-1 in the final. The duo will serve as the primary understudies to Hoffman this year.

Heavyweight – No. 7 Tate Orndorff rounds out the Ohio State starting lineup at heavyweight. It's his third season starting for the Buckeyes since transferring from Utah Valley.

The fifth-year senior was 11-11 in 2020-21, his first season at Ohio State, and improved that mark to 19-11 last season, but he fell one win short of All-America status at the NCAA championships. In an effort to get to such honors this year, Orndorff has been tightening up some of his weak spots.

"I worked a lot on my leg defense (this offseason)," Orndorff said. "Also just getting back to what I'm best at."

What Orndorff is best at, by his admission, is throws. Not uncommon for a heavyweight, he often finds it easier to simply tackle somebody to the ground rather than go for a leg or an ankle. His nickname, as such, is "Tater Slam."

"I'm just sticking to what I'm good at and letting it fly," Orndorff said. "Can't be upset with that."

Between Hoffman, Orndorff, Romero and Smith, the four heaviest weight classes for the Buckeyes are all filled by redshirt

seniors. That level of guidance in the upper weights lays a solid foundation for the team, according to Jagers.

"When you have that kind of leadership that gets you going, the others feed off it," Jagers said. "That was kind of the message to those guys before the tournament, like, 'Hey, show those young bucks how they're supposed to compete. If you're overmatched with somebody, put it on them and wrestle hard.' And they did. They looked great."

Orndorff is backed up at heavyweight by freshman Nick Feldman, the No. 3 pound-for-pound wrestler on FloWrestling's big board for the 2022 recruiting class. Between him, Mendez and Bouzakis, Ohio State signed each of the top three high school wrestlers in the 2022 class.

"I've been able to wrestle Nick Feldman a lot," Orndorff said. "That's been amazing for me, because he's such a tough wrestler. We've been able to scrap all summer. That's the type of thing you need coming into a season, you need a different look."

"I feel like (the freshmen) have fit right in with the team. They're able to fit right in, and I don't feel like there's necessarily a mentorship role for us, because they've just fit right in with the team, which is cool to see that they're just part of the team now."

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

2022 FOOTBALL

Sept. 3 NOTRE DAME, W 21-10; **10** ARKANSAS STATE, W 45-12; **17** TOLEDO, W, 77-21.; **24** WISCONSIN, W 52-21.

Oct. 1 RUTGERS, W 49-10; **8** at Michigan State, W 49-20; **22** IOWA, W 54-10; **29** at Penn State, W 44-31.

Nov. 5 at Northwestern, W 21-7 **12** INDIANA, W 56-14 **19** at Maryland; **26** MICHIGAN.

2023 FOOTBALL

Sept. 2 at Indiana; **9** YOUNGSTOWN STATE; **16** WESTERN KENTUCKY; **23** at Notre Dame.

Oct. 7 MARYLAND; **14** at Purdue; **21** PENN STATE; **28** at Wisconsin.

Nov. 4 at Rutgers; **11** MICHIGAN STATE; **18** MINNESOTA; **25** at Michigan.

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 2 Mike Baumer Cross Country Classic at Dayton, OH Men: 1/15; Women: 1/13; **9** Big Ten Preview at Michigan, Men 5/6; Women 2/6; **23** Roy Griak Invitational at Minneapolis, Minn. Men: 13/17; Women 5/20; **30** Lakefront Invitational at Chicago, Ill. Men 2/7; Women: 2/11.

Oct. 15 Arturo Barrios Invitational at College Station, Texas; **28** Big Ten Championships at Ann Arbor, Mich. Men: 8/12; Women 4/14.

Nov. 11 NCAA Regional Championships at Terre Haute, Ind. Men: 13/29; W 2/31; **18** NCAA Championships at Stillwater, Okla.

WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY (11-8, 3-5)

Aug. 26 Northeastern, W 4-0; **28** Albany W 3-0.

Sept. 4 LEHIGH, W 4-0; **11** Miami (Ohio), L 1-0; **16** MARYLAND, L 4-2; **18** WAKE FOREST, L 1-0; **23** Rutgers, L 2-0; **25** Penn State, L 2-0; **30** MICHIGAN STATE, W 2-1 (OT)

Oct. 2 KENT STATE, W 4-0; **7** CENTRAL MICHIGAN, W 7-1; **9** Ohio, W 7-1, **14**

IOWA, W 2-0; **16** NORTHWESTERN, L 2-1; **21** Indiana, W 2-1; **23** Bellarmine, W 5-1; **28** Michigan, L 3-1; **30** BALL STATE, W 4-0.

Nov. 3 Big Ten Tournament, Maryland, L 5-2.

MEN'S GOLF

Sept. 7 Frederica Cup at St. Simons Island, Ga., 6/8; **8** Frederica Cup at St. Simons Island, Ga., 7/8; **26** Inverness Intercollegiate at Toledo, Ohio, 4/16 **27** Inverness Intercollegiate at Toledo, Ohio, 7/16.

Oct. 3 Hamptons Invitational at East Hamptons, N.Y., 6/10; **4** Hamptons Invitational at East Hamptons, N.Y., 4/10; **31** Cal Poly Collegiate at Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif.

Nov. 1 Cal Poly Collegiate at Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., 1/13

WOMEN'S GOLF

Sept. 12-13 Dick McGuire/Branch Law Firm at Albuquerque, N.M., 1/17; **23-24** Mason Rudolph at Nashville, Tenn., 1/17.

Oct. 3-4 Barbara Nicklaus Cup at Dublin, Ohio, 7/8; **23** Jim West Challenge at San Marcos, Texas, T9/15; **24** Jim West Challenge at San Marcos, Texas, T7/15.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (7-4-1, 3-3-0)

Oct. 1 at Mercyhurst, W 4-2; **2** at Mercyhurst, W 4-1; **7** WISCONSIN, W 3-1; **8** WISCONSIN, W 4-3; **14-15** at UConn, T 0-0; L 1-6; **20-21** BENTLEY, W 9-2; W 3-1; **28-29** MINNESOTA, W 6-4, L 4-2.

Nov. 10-11 at Michigan State, L 2-4, L 3-4; **18-19** NOTRE DAME; **25-26** at Long Island University.

Dec. 2-3 at Penn State; **16-17** at Bowling Green.

Jan. 6-7 MICHIGAN STATE; **13-14** at Michigan; **20-21** at Wisconsin.

Feb. 3-4 PENN STATE; **10-11** at Notre Dame; **16** MICHIGAN **18** at FirstEnergy Stadium, Cleveland, vs. Michigan; **24-25** at Minnesota.

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (10-1-1, 9-1-1)

Sept. 30 at Minnesota State, W 2-1.

Oct. 1 at Minnesota State, W 5-4; **7** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 5-2; **8** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 6-2; **15-16** at Bemidji State, W 4-0; W 5-2; **21-22** MINNESOTA DULUTH, W 3-2 OT; W 3-2 **28-29** MINNESOTA, L 4-2, T 4-4 (SOW).

Nov. 5 at St. Thomas, W 4-0; **6** at St. Thomas, W 6-0 **18-19** BEMIDJI STATE; **22-23** COLGATE.

Dec. 2-3 at Minnesota Duluth; **17-18** at Cornell; **30-31** at Lindenwood.

Jan. 13-14 WISCONSIN; **20-21** at St. Cloud State; **27-28** MINNESOTA STATE.

Feb. 3-4 at Minnesota; **10-11** ST. THOMAS; **17-18** at Wisconsin.

MEN'S SOCCER (10-3-5, 4-2-2)

Aug. 25 SOUTH CAROLINA, T 1-1; **28** CAL POLY, W 3-0.

Sept. 1 Bowling Green, W 1-0. **5** WRIGHT STATE, W 2-0; **9** BUTLER, W 2-0; **13** Akron, T 3-3.; **18** INDIANA, W 2-1; **21** Cleveland State, T 0-0; **25** Maryland, L 1-0; **30** RUTGERS, T 2-2.

Oct. 5 NORTHERN KENTUCKY, W 3-2; **11** Michigan, W 3-1; **16** NORTHWESTERN, W 2-1; **21** Penn State, T 1-1; **25** MICHIGAN STATE, W 2-1; **30** Wisconsin, L 3-2.;

Nov. 4 Big Ten Tournament, Michigan State, W 1-0; **9** Big Ten Tournament at Rutgers, L 1-2;

WOMEN'S SOCCER (11-5-3, 5-3-2)

Aug. 18 Kansas, W 1-0; **21** Missouri, W 2-1; **26** BYU, L 2-0.

Sept. 1 Dayton, W 4-0; **4** TEXAS A&M, T 0-0; **8** Brown, W 3-2; **11** KENT STATE, W 2-1; **18** Rutgers, L 2-0; **22** Michigan, T 0-0; **25** IOWA, W 2-0; **29** Indiana, W 4-0.

Oct. 2 PENN STATE, W 3-0; **8** Nebraska, T 2-2; **13** MARYLAND, W 7-0; **16** Illinois, W 6-1; **20** MICHIGAN STATE, L 0-1; **23** NORTHWESTERN, L 0-2; **30** Big Ten quarterfi-

nals at Nebraska, L 4-0.

Nov. 11 NCAA Tournament, Bucknell, W 1-0 (2 OT); **18** at Arkansas.

MEN'S TENNIS

Sept. 19 Columbus Challenger at Columbus, Ohio.

Oct. 1 ITA All-American Championship at Tulsa, Okla.; **20** ITA Midwest Regional Championship at Champaign, Ill.; **24** Las Vegas Challenger at Las Vegas, Nev.; **31** Ithaca Challenger at Ithaca, N.Y.; **31** Charlottesville Challenger at Charlottesville, Va.

Nov. 2 Big Ten Singles & Doubles Championship; **2** ITA Fall Championship at San Diego, Calif.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Sept. 16 Debbie Southern Furman Fall Classic at Greenville, S.C., NTS; **22** Fall Spotlight at Raleigh, N.C.

Oct. 1 ITA All-Americans at Cary, N.C.; **14** Buckeye Invite at Columbus, Ohio; **20** ITA Midwest Regionals at Ann Arbor, Mich.

Nov. 2 ITA Fall Championships at San Diego, Calif.; **4** ASU Thunderbolt Invitational at San Diego, Calif.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (19-5, 15-1)

Aug. 26 TEXAS, L 3-0; **27** L 3-1.

Sept. 3 San Diego, L 3-0; **4** Louisville, W 3-1; **9**, BYU, W 3-0; **11** Georgia Tech, W 3-1; **17** Tennessee, W 3-0; **18** Pittsburgh, L 3-0; **23** Iowa, W 3-0; **24** Nebraska, L 3-2; **28** Michigan, W 3-1.

Oct. 1 Indiana, W 3-1; **7** PENN STATE, W 3-2; **9** NORTHWESTERN, W, 3-1; **12** Minnesota, W 3-0; **15** RUTGERS, W 3-0; **19** ILLINOIS, W 3-0; **21** IOWA, W 3-1; **26** MICHIGAN, W 3-0; **29** Penn State, W 3-2.

Nov. 4 Northwestern, W 3-0; **5** Michigan State, W 3-0; **10** Purdue, W 3-1.; **13** NEBRASKA, W 3-1.; **18** Maryland.; **20** INDIANA, 1 p.m.; **25** MINNESOTA, 6 p.m.; **26** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.

Laczynski Overcomes Injuries To Reach NHL

It's not uncommon for former Ohio State players to return to campus to visit with past teammates and coaches when their NHL team comes to Columbus to play the Blue Jackets. But for every good intention there's the challenge of making sure schedules align, and that was the problem for Tanner Laczynski when the Philadelphia Flyers were in for a game on Nov. 10.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

He arrived the afternoon prior, but by that time the current Ohio State team was already on the way to East Lansing, Mich., to play Michigan State on Nov. 10 and 11.

Not everyone made the trip north, though, and Laczynski was able to have dinner with injured fifth-year senior Gustaf Westlund.

"He stayed back," Laczynski said. "He's been through some injury troubles as well. It was good to see him."

In addition to being Buckeye teammates for two seasons from 2018-20, they share a history of injuries, and for Laczynski, the setbacks almost derailed his goal of playing in the NHL. Almost.

The game at Nationwide Arena vs. the Blue Jackets was his 16th for the Flyers since his NHL debut on April 3, 2021. The forward had two assists on Oct. 13 against the New Jersey Devils for his only career points.

There were times when the sixth-round pick (169th overall) by Philadelphia in the 2016 NHL draft had doubts about his future following an 18-month period after completing his eligibility at Ohio State when he underwent separate surgeries on each hip and an operation for a core muscle injury.

"Anytime you go through surgery or surgeries in a short period of time, you might question some stuff, your ability or if you're

ever going to get back to your form before," he told BSB on Nov. 10. "But for me, it's just being able to stick with it, put in the work necessary and do all the little things to get me back and feel more confident. I think that's the big thing for me. Obviously, I'm still figuring out some things here, but for the most part, I think I'm pretty healthy and close to 100 percent."

Laczynski was a second-team All-American as a sophomore in 2017-18 when he helped the Buckeyes reach the Frozen Four for the second time in program history (1997-98). There was speculation that he would sign with the Flyers after the season or certainly following his junior season because draft picks with his level of success don't commonly spend four years in college, but he ended up playing four years for the Buckeyes through the 2019-20 season.

He is at peace both with his original choice to go to school over playing junior hockey and then not to leave Ohio State early.

"Yeah, 100 percent," he said. "Honestly my biggest thing was I didn't want to have any regrets. Looking back, I'm happy with the decision I made. I didn't want to have that regret later on in life being like, 'Well, I should have gone to school, or, I should have stuck with school for four years. I should have done this, should have done that.'

"I think later on in life, I'll still find that same thing, that I will be happy with it."

He credits his time at Ohio State with helping him make the jump to pro hockey. He said playing 36 or so games a season compared to double that in juniors was beneficial.

"Just to go to college and be at Ohio State, we don't have as many games but I think that's kind of a developmental thing; being able to be in the weight room five days a week, practice every day and then just kind of focus on two games," Laczynski said. "I think that was a big thing in order to build size, strength, speed. All the stuff off the ice translated to on the ice."

He had 143 points (48 goals, 95 assists) in 138 games for the Buckeyes, which is tied

for 22nd all-time in the program. He was the third Ohio State player since 2000 to average better than a point per game (1.04).

"Tanner went about his business the right way," Ohio State coach Steve Rohlik said. "He's one guy you could always point to and say, 'Follow his example,' on and off the ice. He worked to get better every day."

His commitment finally paid off when Laczynski reached the NHL against the New York Islanders near the end of the 2020-21 season. He had been with Lehigh Valley (Allentown, Pa.) of the American Hockey League when he got promoted.

"It was crazy. I felt like I was playing pretty well down in Lehigh and I was gaining confidence every game," he said. "Anytime you get called up, I didn't know if I was going to be playing or not, but then I ended up playing. It's a memory and experience that I'll never forget."

That was topped Oct. 29 when his wife, Madison, gave birth to their first child, a boy named Leo.

"Oh, it's been incredible. It's life-changing," Laczynski said. "He's a little bundle of joy. Honestly, you'd be mad at something but then you come home and seeing him that's really truly special."

He said he never thought about playing in Nationwide Arena for the Flyers while he was at Ohio State. He did play one game there as a Buckeye in the 2018 Big Ten tournament semifinal, a 3-2 overtime win vs. Michigan.

"I was just dreaming about playing in the NHL," he said. "But to come back here and be able to play in the rink that we won the Big Ten semifinal in is awesome. It's crazy to be here. I'm just trying to enjoy every moment."

His return to Columbus did not go as well as hoped for him or the Flyers, who lost 5-2. Laczynski was on the fourth line and played only 8:09, while top forwards average between 16 and 20 minutes of ice time.

"I'm trying to build off every game," he said. "I feel like the last couple of games I've gotten a little bit more confidence, possessing the puck a little bit more and doing things that

I was used to doing before all the injuries.

"That's part of it. I didn't think I still had that part of my game. I've been feeling a lot better, feeling stronger on the puck."

Double Trouble

The No. 10 Buckeyes (7-4-1, 3-3-0 Big Ten) extended their losing streak to three games after 4-2 and 4-3 losses at Michigan State on Nov. 10-11.

In the first game, the score was tied 2-2 in the third period when Michigan State's Daniel Russell scored the go-ahead goal for the Spartans. They added an empty-netter with 56 seconds left.

Freshman defenseman Tyler Duke had scored his first goal to give the Buckeyes a 1-0 lead at 14:39 of the first period. Jake Wise made it 2-2 at 14:12 of the second, but the Buckeyes were hampered by giving the Spartans five power plays from late in the first through the middle period, resulting in one Michigan State score.

In the rematch, the Spartans (8-3-1, 4-1-1) scored a minute into the game. Buckeye Joe Dunlap tied it at 6:39, but Michigan State took a 3-1 lead after 20 minutes.

OSU's Travis Treloar made it 3-2 with a power-play goal at 1:27 of the second before MSU carried a 4-2 advantage into the third. Davis Burnside cut the deficit to 4-3 at 6:29, but the Buckeyes were unable to get the equalizer.

"This was a tough weekend," Rohlik said after game two. "The first two periods tonight weren't great and we put ourselves in a hole. The positive was how hard we battled in the third. That's the way we need to play for 60 minutes."

Next

The Buckeyes host Notre Dame at 7 p.m. on Nov. 18 and 5 p.m. the next day.

For a complete recap of the Michigan State series, go to the BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



Press
Pub + on 5th
GOOD FOOD + FINE DRINKS



Press good food
fine drinks **Grill**

Both locations open for lunch & dinner daily!

1505 W. 5th Ave
Near Grandview Ave
614-817-1198

Monday - Saturday:
11 AM - 10 PM
Sunday:
NOON - 10 PM

KITCHEN UNTIL 10 PM NIGHTLY

741 N. High St
In the Short North
614-298-1014

Monday - Saturday:
11:30 AM - 12:30 AM
Sunday:
NOON - 12:30 AM

KITCHEN UNTIL MIDNIGHT DAILY

presscolumbus.com



A Home for Hands that Build.™



The Strait & Lamp Group



Strait & Lamp Lumber
A Division of The Strait & Lamp Group



Dublin Millwork
A Division of The Strait & Lamp Group



Linworth Lumber
A Division of The Strait & Lamp Group



5th Ave. Lumber
A Division of The Strait & Lamp Group



S&L Contracting
A Division of The Strait & Lamp Group



Lumbercraft
A Division of The Strait & Lamp Group

www.straitandlamp.com

Road To The Playoffs Starts Now For OSU

One more game and then the college football playoffs begin, starting Nov. 26 in Ohio Stadium. Yes, Ohio State could make it into the playoffs even with a loss to Michigan. But that's a prospect – and hope – no Buckeye fan would be comfortable waiting through.

Consider the game against Michigan

**EXNER
POINT
Rich Exner**

the quarterfinal round of this year's playoffs. Win and move on. Lose and cross your fingers. Why do I say the quarterfinal round when Ohio State would still have the Big Ten Championship Game the following week, before the national semifinals?

First, I don't think there's any chance Ohio State would lose to whoever the Big Ten West sends to the game. And second, I don't think it matters. A 12-1 record, including a win over No. 3 Michigan, would be enough to guarantee a spot in the playoffs.

The pressure really is on the Michigan game. Let's consider what the loser will be left with.

One playoff spot goes to Georgia. The

Bulldogs are in, even should they lose a game down the stretch. A second spot goes to the Michigan-Ohio State winner. The third spot goes to TCU, if the Horned Frogs finish the season unbeaten. That looks like a real possibility after their 17-10 win over Texas on Nov. 12.

Here's how I think the committee's preferences would line up for the fourth spot, in this order:

1. A one-loss Pac-12 champion USC team, if USC can accomplish that. (UCLA, Notre Dame and the Pac-12 title game are left.)

2. A two-loss LSU team if it wins the SEC title game over Georgia. Though I disagree with this thinking, I think the committee will view it this way over the scenarios below, and maybe even over a one-loss USC team.

3. A one-loss Michigan or Ohio State team if that loss comes in a tight OSU-UM game.

4. A one-loss Tennessee team if the OSU-UM loser is beaten convincingly.

5. A one-loss Michigan or Ohio State team if it loses by a wide margin in that game.

6. Clemson, with one loss.

So, there you have it. The Ohio State-Michigan loser could be left competing with multiple teams for the last one or two playoff spots. One caveat must be noted, however. Crazy things can happen as the season unwinds. What if TCU

loses and the Pac-12 champion ends up with two losses? Then we could be talking about two Big Ten teams and two SEC teams making up the playoff field.

Getting Ready For Michigan

The ideal situation at Maryland this week for Ohio State would be to blow Maryland out in the first half. Take care of business early and pull most of the starters for the entire second half, for three reasons:

1. Rest is especially nice 11 games into the season. Head into the Michigan game as fresh as possible.

2. Avoid new injuries and allow nagging injuries more time to heal.

3. Avoid targeting penalties. Remember, any targeting foul in the second half at Maryland means that player will have to sit out the first half of the Michigan game.

The Smith-Njigba Factor

Ohio State would be helped immensely if wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba returns for the Michigan game.

It's been relatively easy to overcome the loss of Smith-Njigba (remember 15 catches for 347 yards and three touchdowns in the Rose Bowl?) for most of the first 10 games. But it would be a huge boost to have him back for Michigan and a potential playoff run. Pairing him with Marvin Harrison Jr. is an awesome possibility, even if Smith-Njigba is a bit rusty.

The Buckeye offense, though still averaging a second-in-the-nation 46.8 points a game, has been sluggish lately. The added weapon could be just what it needs.

Healthy Running Backs

I like what freshman running back Dallan Hayden has shown with 357 yards rushing and 4.9 yards per carry. But I like Ohio State's chances a lot better against Michigan or anyone in the playoffs if both Miyan Williams (783 yards, 6.7 average) and TreVeyon Henderson (552 yards, 5.8 average) can be healthy at the same time. That's a big unknown heading into Maryland and beyond.

Balanced Offense?

If Ohio State has difficulty running the football against Michigan, abandon the run this time around.

I still think OSU stuck with the run too long last year, picking up an average of 2.1 yards per rush (64 yards on 30 carries) and 8.0 yards per pass attempt (34 of 49 for 394 yards). The only thing I've seen stop Ohio State's passing game the last two years are the 30-40 mph winds at Northwestern.

Yes, a balanced attack is nice, and a good running game makes passing easier. But if running isn't working, pass, pass and pass – and then pass even more.

Scoreboard Watching

Ohio State and Michigan have had five common opponents so far – Indiana, Iowa, Michigan State, Penn State and Rutgers. In those games, the average score has been 50.4 to 17.0 for Ohio

State, and 36.0 to 13.0 for Michigan.

In all Big Ten games, Ohio State has won by an average of 46.4 to 16.1; Michigan by 35.4 to 13.6. And in all games, Ohio State has won by an average of 46.8 to 15.6; Michigan by 41.4 to 11.2.

Still A Stunning Statistic

Yes, for Buckeye fans the 2021 loss to Michigan still stings. But, stepping back, the recent history is still stunning, especially for anyone who can remember the OSU-UM games of the 1970s, '80s and '90s.

Recently, Ohio State won eight straight over Michigan before last year. And until last year, the only loss since 2003 was in 2011 when OSU's team was a mess playing under an interim coach en route to probation. That's 15-2 since 2003, including last year.

Since Jim Tressel famously made the promise of being ready for Michigan after his hiring January 2001, OSU is now 17-3 against Michigan.

High Marks For Day

Ryan Day is now 44-4 as a head coach for the Buckeyes. That means he's won 91.7% of his games. Just worth noting sometimes:

- Urban Meyer was 83-9 (90.2 percent).
- Tressel was 106-22 (82.8 percent).
- John Cooper was 111-43-4 (71.5 percent).
- Earle Bruce was 81-26-1 (75.5 percent).
- Woody Hayes was 205-61-10 (76.1 percent).

My Top 10

1. Georgia (10-0) – Georgia's win over Tennessee is the best win to date.
2. Ohio State (10-0) – If Ohio State beats Michigan, I just might swap the Buckeyes ahead of Georgia on grounds of the best win in college football this season.
3. Michigan (10-0) – Michigan had a questionable stretch earlier this season, beating Maryland by 7, Iowa by 13 and Indiana by 21 on consecutive weeks. But Michigan is now on a string of wide-margin victories.
4. TCU (10-0) – An argument could be made to place TCU in the third spot.
5. Tennessee (9-1) – For the time being, I'm sticking with the Vols as the top team in the country with a loss.
6. USC (9-1) – If the Trojans close out with wins over UCLA and Notre Dame and win the Pac-12 title game, I'm moving them up in these rankings. Sorry, Tennessee.
7. LSU (9-2) – Slipped by Arkansas, 13-10, but does have wins over Alabama and Ole Miss.
8. Penn State (8-2) – I think this team is better than most people realize.
9. Clemson (9-1) – Not so impressive this season.
10. Alabama (8-2) – A lot of close calls and two losses on this résumé.

Let our family help your family.

GEICO

LOCAL OFFICE



614-934-3131
8651 Sancus Blvd.
Kyle Haskins
Columbus Office



614-689-8140
1730 Stringtown Road
Joshua Haskins
Grove City Office

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. 2018 GEICO

Here's Hoping Injuries Have Run Their Course

Ohio State bounced back from its wind-swept 21-7 victory over Northwestern with a resounding 56-14 victory over Indiana. Despite another Saturday of inclement (though not quite as inclement) weather, the Buckeyes racked up 662 yards against the hapless Hoosiers, their second-highest total of the season (Toledo, 763). More importantly, the run-repressed offense turned in a season-high performance with a whopping 340 yards on the ground despite playing most of the game with running backs from the lower end of the pecking order.

What's more, the OSU defense turned in another strong performance, allowing Indiana just 269 yards, forcing nine three-and-outs and 12 punts.

So why am I left with this slightly uneasy feeling?

True, Indiana was not the strongest of opponents. But Ohio State beat the Hoosiers like a playoff contender should beat a Big Ten bottom-feeder – and maybe then some. What is it that's bugging me?

First and foremost, I think it is the fact that The Game is coming up in less than two weeks. While I have total confidence in the Ohio State defense and I am sure that Jim Knowles has been tucked away working on stopping the Michigan offense since the day he was hired, I would have hoped that the offense was peaking at this point in the season, which doesn't feel like the case.

I know, Ohio State ran for 340 yards against IU. But there is still that nagging problem with short-yardage situations. Ohio State faced third or fourth down with 3 yards or less to go seven times and converted on just two of them, though I readily acknowledge that one of those conversions was a 48-yard touchdown run by Miyan Williams. But that was against Indiana – currently the 120th ranked team in the country in total defense (446.3) and, more importantly, No. 100 against the run (176.1).

In case you haven't been paying attention, Michigan leads the country in both total defense (232.8) and rushing defense (72.7).

"That felt more like a normal game, other than the short-yardages again," Ohio State coach Ryan Day admitted after the Indiana game. "I was ready to bang my head against the wall."

So were thousands of Buckeye fans (and me), Coach.

Ohio State-Michigan games are often close and, as we were painfully reminded last season, usually come down to which team controls the trenches. I would hate to see the game come down to the Buckeyes needing a yard and proving unable to get it.

As someone used to say, and I always attribute this to Jim Tressel, "If you can't gain a yard, you don't deserve to win anyway."

You throw in the bizarre series of injuries in the backfield and there is legitimate reason for concern, though if the offensive line opens up the holes, both Dallan Hayden and Xavier Johnson, if it comes down to them, have shown that they can get through them.

The best way to loosen up a run defense is with a strong pass offense.

I know, C.J. Stroud posted an outstanding line against the Hoosiers, completing 17 of 28 passes for 297 yards and, more impressively, five touchdowns without an interception.

But why does he not look *quite* as sharp to me as he did before the off week? Does he look as sharp to you? He's looked fine, but does he look like the magician he appeared early on? Or the unquestioned Heisman front-runner and even better than Dwayne Haskins and Justin Fields, who came before him?

Are my expectations unrealistic? This is C.J. Stroud.

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

Stats don't always tell the whole story, but I felt compelled to check out Stroud's numbers before and after the break.

In the first six games of the season, he completed 70.6 percent of his passes, averaged 289.5 yards through the air per game and had 24 touchdowns against three interceptions. In the four games since the off week, he has completed 62.4 percent of his passes for 253.3 yards per game with 10 touchdowns and a pick.

I know, the competition has maybe been a little tougher since the break and the conditions certainly less ideal. It's the edge I worry about. It's the passes he has been missing that he made look so easy just a couple of weeks ago.

I would feel a lot better if the C.J. of the early season, the one that just made your jaw drop, returned in time for the grudge match that I, like everyone else, has been waiting for since last November.

When the Ohio State offense is in that amazing, balanced mode that we have all seen, you might be able to stop the run, or you might be able to stop the pass. But it is almost impossible to stop both.

I remain confident in the Buckeyes. In my opinion they have better players and better coaches than their rivals. They will have a rabid home crowd behind them. They will also have had a full year to stew about last year's manhandled loss.

Get back that edge and happy days will be here again.

Tight Ends And Tidbits

It's getting to the point that I don't really even need to point out the use or lack of use of the tight ends anymore. Cade Stover comes through week after week, and the coaches continue to use him as a primary option.

Against Indiana he contributed another three receptions for 45 yards and another two touchdowns, one of the highlight-reel variety. He now has 29 receptions on the year for 366 yards and five touchdowns. To be honest, it seems like a lot more.

I'd go so far as to say that Stover, along with Marvin Harrison Jr., is one of the two most consistent players on the offense.

And speaking of Harrison, how does he have that foot control? Does he have some sort of sideline drill that is part of his regimen? Very impressive.

• There are a lot of teams out there that can field a strong 22-player lineup. But the really great teams also have complementary players. They are not superstars, but they contribute when needed. Last issue I mentioned tight end/fullback Mitch Rossi and the fine season he is having.

What about Xavier Johnson? Talk about a guy who can do a little bit of everything.

Against Indiana he had a dazzling 71-yard touchdown run, two receptions for 47 yards including a 34-yarder and a kickoff return for 30 yards, plus he recovered a blocked punt to set up a touchdown. Not a bad day's work.

I'll be honest with you. If the Buckeyes had to go into battle with Johnson as their starting running back, I think he would answer the bell.

And speaking of that 71-yard touchdown run, see if you can find a clip of it. There had been murmurs that the Buckeyes have not been as strong as usual with their down-field blocking. Check out Johnson's run. There are Buckeyes hitting Hoosiers everywhere.

• It seems to me that Michigan's reputation this season is based almost exclusively on its domination of Penn State. Buckeye detractors or worriers point to Ohio State's performance against the Nittany Lions as not matching up. I made my case after the win over PSU that Ohio State's performance against the Lions was not that far off from that of the Wolverines, especially given the fact the Buckeye victory came in Happy Valley.

But if you want to play that comparison game, keep in mind that Ohio State beat Indiana 54-16, while Michigan beat the Hoosiers 31-10. In fact, against common opponents, Ohio State's average margin of victory is 50.4 to 17.0, while Michigan's is 36.0 to 13.0. The Wolverines beat Maryland by a single score, 34-27. We will see how the Buckeyes do against the Terrapins in their final tune-up before The Game.

Reprint Thursday

If you are not familiar with our Reprint Thursdays at the BuckeyeSports.com website, each Thursday we reprint stories from the vast Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives, usually with some sort of connection to the current date. With Indiana coming to town, for the Nov. 10 edition of Reprint Thursday we offered stories from five years ago covering Ohio State's season-opening win over the Hoosiers in 2017.

In that game on Aug. 31, a little-known freshman running back named J.K. Dobbins, playing for an injured Mike Weber who had rushed for over 1,000 yards as a freshman the year before, exploded on the scene with 181 rushing yards in a 49-21 Buckeye victory. Dobbins would go on to rush for 4,459 yards in his Ohio State career, second only to Archie Griffin's 5,589 yards.

Anytime I look at a past issue of BSB, I always find something interesting.

For instance, I had forgotten that this game was not only Dobbins' debut, but it was also the debut of co-offensive coordinators Ryan Day and Kevin Wilson. The two started their Ohio State collaboration on the right foot, leading the Buckeyes to 596 total yards on a balanced 304 yards passing and 292 yards rushing. The two have been racking up the yards and points ever since.

Day's first Ohio State project at quarterback was J.T. Barrett, and the senior and his new quarterback guru did not disappoint. Barrett complemented Dobbins with 304 yards passing and three touchdowns without an interception. Barrett also ran for 61 yards on 13 carries, and those 365 total yards pushed him past Art Schlichter into first place on Ohio State's all-time total offense list with 9,086. Schlichter had held the mark for more than three decades with 8,851.

You may recall that Wilson had parted ways with the Hoosiers the season before amid questions about his treatment of injured players. So, the coach's first game with the Buckeyes was in his old stomping grounds.

"It was difficult," Wilson said after the game of his return to Bloomington. "I mean, we worked hard to keep our focus on the job and it was good. We knew it would be a tough job. They did a great job defensively early with some things and different looks, and we had to adjust so I think the ability to stay calm. But it was a good win, tough to be back here. I love those kids, but also I love (the Ohio State) locker room. That's a lot of fun and I'm looking forward to this new challenge."

Wilson's first game with the Buckeyes was current IU coach Tom Allen's first with the Hoosiers, and Indiana led 14-13 at the half. The Buckeyes rallied in the final 30 minutes, but in what was a harbinger of things to come in 2018, Ohio State yielded a whopping 420 yards and three touchdowns through the air.

The always candid Urban Meyer was none too pleased.

"Our defense was exposed big time in the first half," Meyer said in his postgame press conference. "The pass defense was awful. It wasn't complicated, (Indiana was) just picking on corners, so the corners have got to step up. We see what's coming in about eight days, nine days, whenever that is – Oklahoma (on Sept. 9). If we don't get that right, it's a problem."

Meyer knew of what he spoke.

Baker Mayfield bought his Sooners into Ohio Stadium and completed 27 of 35 passes for 386 yards and three TDs without an interception, and Oklahoma staked their flag on the Buckeyes, 31-16. It was a problem that was not corrected until Jeff Hafley was brought in to help fix the offense two years later.

Déjà Vu All Over Again

A note in this space from that Sept. 9, 2017, issue of BSB under the heading, "Off To A Poor Start" caught my attention.

"No View From 15th & High is complete without me mentioning poor postal service," I wrote here in September of 2017. "Many of you got a dose of postal reality with our Football Preview issue, which was mailed on Aug. 22. Many people in Columbus got their BSBs a week or more after they were mailed, and readers in the Toledo area may still be waiting for their papers."

That was five years ago and things have only gotten worse. Maybe I should have brought Jeff Hafley in to try to fix the problem.

Just a reminder.

Ohio State and Michigan are on a collision course for Nov. 26, the week of Thanksgiving. That means no mail on Thursday of that week, a critical day in our mail flow, because of the holiday. In hopes of getting Buckeye Sports Bulletin's Michigan Preview issue, with its popular Michigan Memories in it, to as many readers as possible before the noon kickoff on that Saturday, we are offering readers the chance to upgrade their subscription to first-class mail in an envelope for both the Michigan Preview and Wrap Up for just \$6 to cover the added postage and envelopes.

To make sure you get your subscription upgraded on time, call us at (614) 486-2202 to order by credit card. You can also mail your \$6 to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Either way, mention the "Michigan Upgrade."

Inflation Donation

Buckeye Sports Bulletin's printing rates were raised by 9 percent in June, and the postage rates that we use to mail your paper went up by as much as 20 percent. We are trying to hold the line on our base subscription rates, but these substantial increases have put stress on these rates.

In order to hold the line as best as possible, we have been asking those who can afford it to participate in our VIP program, helping keep BSB vibrant and allowing us to try to assist those subscribers who are having a problem paying the full rate.

Readers can participate at the Brutus level for just \$50 and, in addition to other perks, will have their names listed in the upcoming Michigan issue, as well as another upcoming issue.

To participate and show your support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin, see page 5 of this issue or give us a call at the above number.

CONRADS

THE BUCKEYE STATE STORE™

FREE SHIPPING TUESDAYS AFTER OSU WIN



BEAT MICHIGAN BUTTON
FREE



CARMEN OHIO TRI BLEND TEE
\$29.95



50X60 PLUSH BLANKET
\$39.95



WOOL & LEATHER VARSITY COAT
\$249.95



8X CHAMPIONS TWILL COAT
\$169.95



HAND BLOWN ORNAMENT
\$26.95



WOMEN'S CORDED SWEATSHIRT
\$64.95



BEAT MICHIGAN TEE
\$19.95



EARN YOUR BUCKEYE LEAF BY JOINING THE CONRADS CLUB!

COLOSSEUM OFFICIALLY LICENSED FOOTBALL JERSEYS IN STOCK NOW!
AVAILABLE IN ADULT, YOUTH, TODDLER, AND INFANT ONESIE

FOOTBALL SEASON HOME GAME POP-UP
OVER 1,000 SQ FT OF BUCKEYE GEAR
RIVERWATCH TOWER · 364 W LANE AVE
FREE BEAT BUTTON EACH GAME

NOW OPEN!!!
71 W SCHROCK RD ·
WESTERVILLE, OH 43081
WESTERVILLE PLAZA- NEXT TO KROGER



614-269-7091

ALWAYS OPEN AT
CONRADSOSU.COM



SCAN TO SHOP