

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$3.00

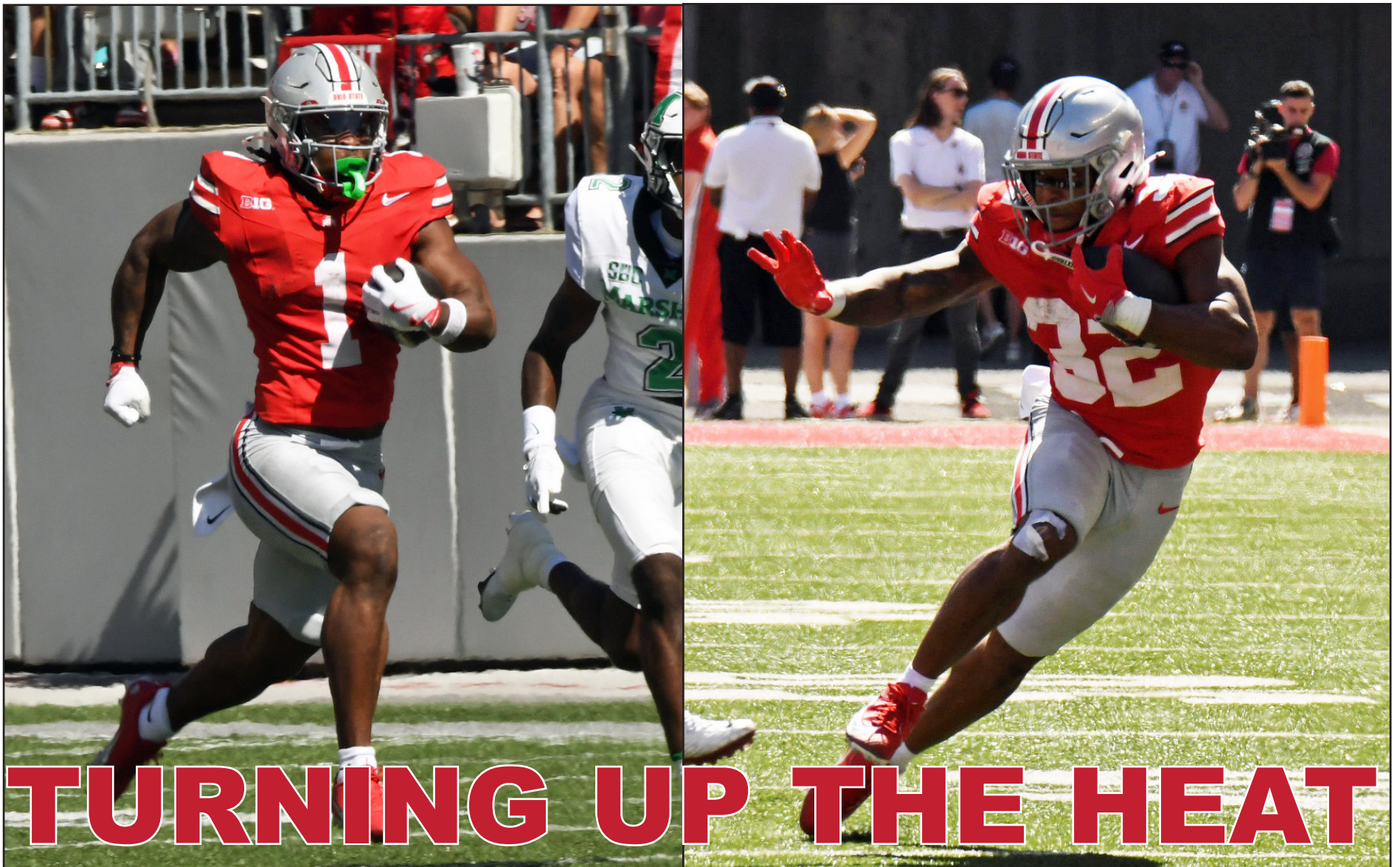
PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!



Vol. 44, No. 3

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Sept. 28, 2024



SONNY BROCKWAY

TWO GOOD — The dynamic duo of Quinshon Judkins (1) and TreVeyon Henderson (32) ran wild against Marshall in the 49-14 victory on Sept. 21 when they combined for 249 rushing yards and four touchdowns, including an 86-yarder for Judkins and a 40-yard run for Henderson.

Judkins, Henderson Lead Buckeyes To 49-14 Win Over Marshall

By **GREG WILSON**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

After Quinshon Judkins announced that he was transferring from Ole Miss to Ohio State over the offseason and TreVeyon Henderson decided that he would be returning for one more season in Columbus, fans were eagerly anticipating getting to watch

the duo on the field together since they both had already proved they were two of the top running backs in the country.

Judkins entered the season with 2,725 rushing yards and 31 touchdowns in two seasons, averaging 120.5 yards per game during his freshman season at Ole Miss. In Henderson's previous three seasons at Ohio State, he accumulated 2,745 yards on the

ground and 32 touchdowns, a number that could have been higher had he not struggled with injuries along the way.

Now that the two have come together in the same backfield, they have formed a two-headed monster that is going to prove tough for any defense to stop. In Ohio State's 49-14 win over Marshall on Sept. 21, played in front of 103,871 fans on a scorching Ohio Stadium turf, the two proved yet again that they might need to be the main focus for opposing defenses, combining for 249 yards and four touchdowns on the ground, showing the Marshall squad what a "thundering herd" looks like in action after totaling just 2 yards of rushing as a team in the first quarter.

Quarterback Will Howard watched in awe as he handed the ball off to the two of them 20 times total, knowing that their explosiveness made his job easier and the

entire offense better.

"I was sitting on the sideline today, and I was talking to some of the other quarterbacks," Howard said. "I was like, 'Our offense is so explosive, it's crazy.' I mean, literally, every play could be a touchdown. If we block everything up, every play could break for a touchdown, and it's exciting."

"You never know when Tre is going to go take a run that should have probably been tackled for an 8-yard loss and just stiff-arm somebody into next week, and Quinshon superhero slamming somebody, it's fun. It makes it exciting. You never know what's going to happen on any certain play. I've just got to do my job, and I've just got to keep us on schedule and be sharp."

"When the run game is clicking like that, it makes my job easy, because we're not in

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

Continued On Page 10

From The Message Board

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State shrugged off a slow start in Week 4 to take care of Marshall 49-14 in its final nonconference tuneup before Big Ten play, improving to 3-0 on the season. Here are some choices from Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff members and readers from the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum for players who were worthy of receiving Buckeye Leaves after the win.

Patrick Engels, BSB: I'm giving my Buckeye Leaf to fifth-year safety Lathan Ransom, who continues to show he is one of Ohio State's more impactful players on defense. Ransom is seldom talked about due to the star power on the Buckeyes' vaunted defense, but he certainly made his presence felt against Marshall.

The longtime Buckeye was all over the field in Week 4, running sideline-to-sideline to record a game-high eight tackles (six solo), including one for loss. He made the biggest impact near the line of scrimmage, where he delivered a number of physical hits both on Herd rushes and short passes, and forced a fumble on Herd quarterback Stone Earle during Marshall's first offensive drive that landed out of bounds before the Buckeyes could recover.

And Ransom continues to play with great passion and emotion, which is nice to see considering he missed the final five games of the 2023 season with an injury.

Bobby Gorbett, BSB: Ohio State senior wide receiver Emeka Egbuka looked like his 2022 self in Ohio State's win over Marshall with a game-high 117 yards on five catches. Egbuka's explosive day started with a 68-yard touchdown reception on a well-executed screen pass that tied the game at 7.

In the second half, Egbuka went for another explosive play on a 28-yard reception from Will Howard. He wrapped up a four-catch, 111-yard first-half performance with a 7-yard grab to pick up a third-down conversion.

Egbuka's day cooled off some after an action-packed first half, due in large part to an extremely efficient second-half rushing attack. But his 117 yards against Marshall were still the most he has accumulated in a single game since the 2022 Michigan game, in which he went for 125 yards and a score on nine catches.

Egbuka's performance against Marshall, in addition to the two solid outings he had against Akron and Western Michigan, represents something of a return to form after an injury-plagued 2023 season, as he has averaged 88.7 yards per game through those three games.

Greg Wilson, BSB: My Buckeye Leaf goes to Quinshon Judkins, who took over on the offensive side of the ball for the second straight game. Ever since he transferred to Ohio State, there were a lot of people eagerly anticipating the 1-2 punch that he and TreVeyon Henderson would provide for the run game.

He has been exactly as advertised so far in scarlet and gray. He rushed nine times for 108 yards and two touchdowns in the 56-0 win over Western Michigan, missing an even bigger stat line with an 80-yard touchdown called back for holding.

But he got that long touchdown against Marshall, running for 86 yards to score, a run that is now tied for the third-longest rushing touchdown in Ohio State history with J.T. Barrett's 86-yard touchdown run against Minnesota on Nov. 15, 2014.

It seemed like every time the ball was in his hands, he was going to be breaking off a big run. His 12.4 yards per carry against Marshall is evidence of that.

He finished with 14 carries for 173 yards and two touchdowns in the win over the Thundering Herd and only provided Buckeyes fans with even more excitement for what the duo can do over a full season.

BSB Subscribers

Bob Cody: Buckeye Leaves for our breakaway touchdown fleet: Emeka Egbuka, Quinshon Judkins, TreVeyon Henderson and Jeremiah Smith. A Leaf for their facilitators: The oft-maligned offensive line, and Will Howard. A Leaf for Lathan Ransom on defense.

Buckeye Scott: Emeka Egbuka looks as smooth and as fast as when he was a freshman. Quinshon Judkins is a beast with the ball and Lathan Ransom laid some wood today. I also thought Carnell Tate looked effective with four receptions.

Poster That Harley Built: EVERYONE on offense, including the master, Chip Kelly. And a leaf to kicker Austin Snyder for stopping the carnage.

Tiffin Buckeye: Quinshon Judkins. He's fast as heck and a tough runner.

PeyoteBuck: I have to say Judkins, that man was on fire. Egbuka too. Fantastic.

R1TBDBITL: Emeka Egbuka. Great to see him make the most of his touches.

Ohio State won convincingly in its Week 4 matchup against Marshall, defeating the Thundering Herd 49-14 to improve to 3-0 on the season, but its performance was not as crisp as it had been in its previous game against Western Michigan.

Head coach Ryan Day proclaimed the week between the Western Michigan and Marshall games an "improvement week." With this in mind, we asked readers on our Buckeyesports.com Fan Forum if they think Ohio State improved as a team from Week 2 to Week 4.

"No. Special teams was asleep at the wheel. It was painful to watch. Speaking of watching, I bet they will be looking at some film. Defense needs help."

– **PeyoteBuck**

"If anything, I thought they took a step back, especially on defense. Not having Tyleik Williams made a big difference because I thought the defensive line looked average, not championship-caliber. And did Parker Fleming sneak back into the special teams room? The offense was probably as good as it was against Western Michigan – which is really good. But on the whole, the team was not as "crisp," to use your word, as it was against the Broncos.

"All-in-all I'll take a 49-14 win, but I'm looking for improvement every week."

– **Mcarr**

"No. 3 Ohio State has such a large talent differential over most teams that they have a large margin of error. Against Marshall, they won rather easily while not playing anywhere near as well as they can.

"On the micro level, I think the coaches will be able to identify certain improvements, but on the macro level, for the average fan, the performance seemed to be a small step backward.

"I sincerely hope there's not a problem with complacency and overconfidence among the players – although it would be justifiable.

– **Terrier Buck**

"The defense held, but it made me worry a bit about how it will hold up to an outstanding offense. Perhaps it was just the rust from an off week."

– **Michael Bauer**

"I hate these bye weeks or as Day called it 'an improvement week.' I'm thinking some on the team had a little too much time on their hands and read some of that 'rat poison,' as Nick Saban would refer to, about the overly positive praise from the press. Guess what, we get to experience another 'improvement week' later this season."

– **BuckeyeScott**

"This talented team is not yet a finished product, nor should it be. They

still have a lot of work to do but we have seen flashes of what they can do on offense, defense and special teams. It's a long season and they need to improve their consistency in all phases.

"If they have the resolve, they will learn to overcome less than ideal performances and battle through adversity. They will have imperfect games. Give Marshall credit for very good offensive execution. Games like Saturday played in extreme heat will help make the brotherhood stronger if it is truly a national championship-caliber team.

"It's unfair to say the entire kickoff team was terrible just because Jayden Fielding had a nightmare day. The punt return team's grade was shaded by Brandon Inniss' fumble, which was canceled out. Had Inniss not tripped on the turf, he might have returned one kick for a score."

– **Byron McNutt**

"I agree with Coach Day that we are still trying to find our identity. Special teams really need work. Three kickoffs out of bounds? If Inniss' fumbled punt return wasn't nullified by a ticky-tack penalty, we might be having a completely different conversation.

– **R1TBDBITL**

"I don't see how anyone in their right mind could say that Ohio State improved over the 'improvement week.' To go from a nearly flawless performance against Western Michigan to whatever that was against Marshall is a step back, not a step forward. In fairness, the offense was top-notch, just as it was against the Broncos. It's hard to get any better than that. But the ease with which Marshall cut through the Buckeye defense to start the game was troubling.

"Does missing one player, albeit a great one, make that big a difference? Where's the depth the Buckeyes are supposed to have? And I don't even know what to say about the special teams. It's a three-phase game and if the Buckeyes are serious about going all the way, they need to hit on all three cylinders, not one-and-a-half. And a quick reminder. The last time Penn State beat Ohio State – I believe the only time under James Franklin – the Buckeyes lost because of special teams gaffes.

– **Poster That Harley Built**

You Can Count On These Services From

THE QUICKPRINT CENTRE

3535 Fishinger Blvd. Suite 100, Hilliard, OH 43026
614-488-2683 • FAX 614-488-0059 • qpoh@aol.com

Offset-Printing	Digital Color Copies	Digital B&W Copies
Typesetting	Ship UPS	Rubber Stamps
NCR Forms	Fax Service	Business Cards
Laminating	Announcements	Binding
Brochures	Wedding Invitations	Labels

Latest Win Most Definitely 'Mixed Bag'

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day hit the bull's-eye when he described his team's 49-14 victory against Marshall as a "mixed bag."

Individual performances by Quinshon Judkins, TreVeyon Henderson, Emeka Egbuka, Jeremiah Smith, Will Howard and Lathan Ransom as well as the almost perfect combination of total offense (280 yards on the ground, 289 through the air) helped paper over an otherwise ragged first-half performance coming from a team that should have been laser-focused following a week off.

Instead, the Buckeyes apparently used their downtime to alternately read their own press clippings and develop some rust.

The nation's No. 1-ranked scoring defense, which hadn't even allowed its first two opponents inside the red zone, let the Thundering Herd and its 74th-ranked scoring offense to take the opening kickoff and march 75 yards for a game-opening touchdown. It was, quite frankly, a surprising punch in the face to a team that entered the game as 40-point favorites.

As previously mentioned, there were plenty of highlights led by the thunder-and-lightning duo of Judkins and Henderson. Sometimes, it's difficult to determine which is thunder and which is lightning since the pair combined to rush for 249 yards and four touchdowns. Each had a scoring run of at least 40 yards, and each displayed power, balance and speed as well as a devastating stiff-arm move not seen since the days of Beanie Wells in the mid- to late-2000s.

If Judkins and Henderson are thunder and lightning, how can we describe the tandem of Egbuka and Smith, who converted each of their eight targets in the game into 187 yards and two scores? Flash and dash? The foursome of Judkins, Henderson, Egbuka and Smith combined to score six times against Marshall, with four of them covering at least 40 yards.

Howard was the touchstone for all of that offense, completing 16 of 20 passes for 275 yards and a couple of touchdowns, and compiling a lofty quarterback rating of 218.5, his best single-game rating since he became a starter at Kansas State in 2020. I still would like to see him showcase his running ability a little more on run-pass options, but Howard's classic quarterback sneak for a 1-yard touchdown on third-and-goal early in the second quarter was a thing of beauty.

Defensively, the Buckeyes were led by Ransom, the veteran safety who sometimes gets overlooked on a star-laden defensive unit. It might interest you to know Ransom has more career tackles than anyone else on the team, and he padded that lead against the Herd with a game-high eight stops. He also forced a fumble near the goal line in the first quarter, nearly thwarting that early score by Marshall.

Outside of Ransom, however, I saw an Ohio State defense getting outguessed and outscored by Marshall early in the game. Not until Jim Knowles junked his original game plan and brought his safeties closer to the line of scrimmage did the Herd begin to slow down. Marshall managed only 264 total yards for the game, including 125 on the ground. Still, that was close to double the 75 rushing yards Akron and Western Michigan managed against the Buckeyes combined.

Not that the offense played flawlessly. Howard took his first sack of the season, and he also threw his first interception as a Buckeye, the result of an underthrown ball, a mediocre route by Smith, and a pretty good defensive play by Marshall defensive back Josh Moten. Incidentally, that was Howard's first INT after 58 attempts to begin his Ohio State career.

Since 1960, only Justin Fields (135) and Troy Smith (85) have had more attempts before throwing their first pick as OSU quarterbacks.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

While some of the mistakes were excusable, others were wholly unacceptable such as three straight kickoffs out of bounds by the normally reliable Jayden Fielding. The misfires resulted in a battlefield demotion for Fielding in favor of senior walk-on Austin Snyder, who also replaced Fielding on the final two PAT kicks of the day. (Note: Snyder isn't exactly a neophyte at the kicking game. He converted 105 PATs and kicked 31 field goals at Findlay before transferring to Ohio State last year.)

There was also a mishandled punt by Brandon Inniss deep in his own territory that could have been deadly had Marshall not been called for an illegal formation.

Finally, regardless of the situation, Day knows better than to stomp out on the field past the numbers to argue with officials. His animated protestations after calling a timeout to prevent a delay-of-game infraction in the third quarter were promptly greeted with a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. There's nothing wrong with working the refs, but no official I know is going to allow a coach to stray that far from the sideline without getting flagged.

All in all, Day's "mixed bag" comment just about covers it. There were just enough teaching moments sprinkled into a five-touchdown victory to keep players' heads out of the clouds and focused on their first road test of the year in the Big Ten season opener at Michigan State.

Targeting Not Targeting

College football is 16 years into its attempt to prevent head injuries by instituting the targeting rule, and officials – most especially those in the Big Ten – continue to exhibit little to no uniformity when calling the penalty.

OSU cornerback Denzel Burke was called for targeting in the game against Western Michigan, and defensive end Caden Curry took his turn in the barrel with a late first-half hit on Marshall quarterback Stone Earle.

Burke was the victim of "a bull-crap call" – his words, not mine, although I totally agree – when Big Ten replay officials pored over a sideline play during which Burke, his teammate Caleb Downs, and WMU running back Jaden Nixon all lowered their heads upon impact. Officials on the field apparently saw no infraction, and only when replay officials looked at the play from several slow-motion angles was Burke called for targeting.

With regard to Curry, yes, the Ohio State defensive end got to Earle late and deserved a personal foul for roughing the quarterback. But for all of the other legal punishment Earle endured from the Buckeyes during the first half, Curry's hit was relatively benign as he shoved the QB to the ground, his helmet pushing forward into Earle's facemask in the process.

Again, no targeting was called on the field, but when officials in the booth reviewed the play, Curry was suddenly disqualified for the remainder of the game.

You could make a pretty good case that Ohio State has been robbed of two national

championship runs in recent years because of the completely arbitrary targeting rule.

The Buckeyes were dominating Clemson in the 2019 College Football Playoff semifinal before a highly questionable targeting call against OSU cornerback Shaun Wade changed the game's momentum on a dime. Three years later in another CFP semifinal, this time against Georgia, Ohio State receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. was the victim of a vicious third-quarter shot to the head that sidelined him for the remainder of the game – obvious targeting that was called on the field and then somehow reversed by officials in the replay booth.

Football is a violent game, and headhunting is a serious offense. There is no doubt in my mind that any player launching himself with malicious intent toward the head and neck area of an opponent should be disqualified.

But if a play must be replayed over and over in slow motion from several different angles, with the offending player showing no obvious intent, then it becomes a judgment call, and no player should ever be disqualified because of a judgment call.

Fun In The Sun (Belt)

With the proliferation of conference realignment, it's becoming more and more difficult to keep history straight when it comes to Ohio State's all-time record. For example, the game against Marshall represented the third time in history the Buckeyes had entertained a current member of the Sun Belt Conference.

The most recent was just two years ago when OSU strolled to a 45-12 victory against Arkansas State. C.J. Stroud threw for 351 yards – one of his program-record 15 games of 300 passing yards or more – and four touchdowns. Three of those scoring strikes went to Marvin Harrison Jr., who caught seven balls for a then career-high 184 yards. Harrison would better his single-game high later that season with 185 yards during a 44-31 win at Penn State.

The first time Ohio State entertained a Sun Belt opponent came against Troy in 2008, a 28-10 victory significant in that it represented the first career start at quarterback for Terrelle Pryor.

The Buckeyes were licking their wounds after a 35-3 pounding from another Trojans team – this one from the University of Southern California – and head coach Jim Tressel was looking for a spark. Pryor provided it, totaling 206 yards rushing and passing and throwing for four touchdowns.

Current OSU receivers coach Brian Hartline was on the receiving end of two of those scores, but tight end Rory Nichol's 13-yard TD catch early in the opening quarter was the first of Pryor's college career. He went on to throw for 57 touchdowns for the Buckeyes, tying Bobby Hoying (1992-95) for fourth most in program history. Only J.T. Barrett (104, 2014-17), Stroud (85, 2020-22) and Fields (63, 2019-20) have more.

I hear what you're saying. Didn't Ohio State play Marshall twice before this season? That is true, but its two previous games against the Buckeyes came as members of other conferences.

The Thundering Herd came to Columbus in 2004 representing the Mid-American Conference and gave the Buckeyes all they wanted before Mike Nugent had to save the day with a 55-yard field goal as time expired to provide Ohio State with a 24-21 victory. Six years later, Marshall was a member of Conference USA when it served as OSU's season-opening opponent and absorbed a 45-7 loss.



Vol. 44, No. 3
Sept. 28, 2024
www.BuckeyeSports.com

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

Columbus Sports Publications
1200 Chambers Road, Suite 206
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: \$119.95/year.

PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Patrick Engels Greg Wilson

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
Mark Rea

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
David Breithaupt Braden Moles
Bill Conley Bob Roehm
Rich Exner Steve Siegfried
Bobby Gorbett Jeff Svoboda
Craig Merz Mike Wachsman

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Paula Serra Ron Friedman

2024-25 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 44)

No. 1	Sept. 7	No. 13	Dec. 21
No. 2	Sept. 21	No. 14	Jan. 18
No. 3	Sept. 28	No. 15	Feb. 1
No. 4	Oct. 5	No. 16	Feb. 15
No. 5	Oct. 12	No. 17	March 8
No. 6	Oct. 26	No. 18	March 22
No. 7	Nov. 2	No. 19	April 5
No. 8	Nov. 9	No. 20	April 19
No. 9	Nov. 16	No. 21	May
No. 10	Nov. 23	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 30	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 7	No. 24	August

The next issue (Oct. 5 cover date) will be mailed on Oct. 1.

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

Wachsman Elite Donor:



OHIO STATE INSIDER

Bucks Remain At No. 3 In AP Poll

Following its 49-14 blowout win over Marshall on Sept. 21, Ohio State remained at No. 3 in the latest AP top 25 poll released one day after the victory.

The Buckeyes find themselves at No. 3 for the second consecutive week behind No. 1 Texas and No. 2 Georgia, earning five first-place votes for the fourth week in a row. The Longhorns, who cruised to a 51-3 victory at home over Louisiana-Monroe in quarterback Arch Manning's starting debut, earned 44 first-place votes, while Georgia, which was idle in Week 4, earned 13.

Although the top four are exactly the same as the week prior with No. 4 Alabama staying put after an off week, the rest of the top 10 experienced some change. Following the Tide were No. 5 Tennessee, which traded spots with No. 6 Ole Miss after a convincing 25-15 win at No. 21 Oklahoma, which dropped six spots from No. 15 to No. 21.

No. 7 Miami (Fla.), No. 8 Oregon and No. 9 Penn State each jumped one spot, while No. 10 Utah jumped two spots following its 22-19 road

win at No. 20 Oklahoma State, which dropped six spots from No. 14 after the loss. No. 11 Missouri fell out of the top 10 after a narrow 30-27 win at home against Vanderbilt.

Defending national champion Michigan experienced the biggest jump in the rankings, surging six spots from No. 18 to No. 12 after its last-second 27-24 victory over USC, which consequently dropped from No. 11 to 13. The Wolverines join fellow Big Ten foe Illinois as the biggest winners of the poll. The Illini moved up five spots from No. 24 to No. 19 after defeating Nebraska 31-24 on the road.

The Cornhuskers fell out of the rankings from No. 22 as a result, meaning the Big Ten now has six ranked teams entering Week 5, the second most by any conference behind the SEC with nine teams.

Several teams also experienced major drop-offs following their Week 4 defeats, including No. 23 Kansas State, which fell 10 spots from No. 13 after a blowout 38-9 road loss to BYU. At No. 22, the Cougars of BYU now find themselves ranked within the top 25 for the first time since the 2022 season.

BYU is one of two newcomers to the poll, joining No. 25 Boise State, which is ranked for the first time since 2020 after a 56-14 win over Portland State.

Williams Ruled Out For Game Against Marshall

Ohio State senior defensive tackle Tyleik Williams was the only notable player ruled out on the team's availability report before the Sept. 21, 49-14 win over Marshall.

Williams, a second-team All-Big Ten selection in 2023, has gotten off to a good start in 2024, with nine tackles (two for loss) and 1½ sacks.

2024 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Aug. 31	AKRON	W, 52-6	CBS	1-3, 50-7 loss to South Carolina
Sept. 7	WESTERN MICHIGAN	W, 56-0	BTN	1-2, idle
Sept. 21	MARSHALL	W, 49-14	FOX	1-2, 49-14 loss to Ohio State
Sept. 28	at Michigan State	7 p.m.	Peacock	3-1, 23-19 loss to Boston College
Oct. 5	IOWA	TBA	TBA	3-1, 31-14 win over Minnesota
Oct. 12	at Oregon	TBA	TBA	3-0, idle
Oct. 26	NEBRASKA	TBA	TBA	3-1, 31-24 loss to Illinois
Nov. 2	at Penn State	TBA	TBA	3-0, 56-0 win over Kent State
Nov. 9	PURDUE	TBA	TBA	1-2, 38-21 loss to Oregon State
Nov. 16	at Northwestern	TBA	TBA	2-2, 24-5 loss to Washington
Nov. 23	INDIANA	TBA	TBA	4-0, 52-14 win over Charlotte
Nov. 30	MICHIGAN	Noon	FOX	3-1, 27-24 win over USC

Hero Kanu made the start at the defensive tackle position in place of Williams. Kanu didn't register a tackle in the team's win, but other interior defensive linemen such as Tywone Malone and Kayden McDonald got in the game to register a combined five total tackles.

After the game, head coach Ryan Day said that Williams is day-to-day.

Senior guard Donovan Jackson made his season debut against Marshall after missing the Buckeyes' first two games with an injury.

OSU-MSU Set For Prime Time On Peacock

Ohio State's Sept. 28 road contest against Michigan State is set for a 7 p.m. kickoff and will stream exclusively on Peacock, the school announced on Sept. 16.

This marks the second-ever Ohio State game that will be aired only on a streaming service and not on a nationally televised broadcast, with the first occurring last October for the Buckeyes' road win against Purdue, which also aired exclusively on Peacock.

This will be the 53rd meeting between Ohio State and the Spartans. The Buckeyes hold a 37-15 advantage over their conference opponent, and they have won each of the last eight games against them.

Michigan State's last win in the all-time series was on Nov. 21, 2015, when it beat Ohio State 17-14 in a game in which J.T. Barrett had just 46 passing yards on nine completions, while Ezekiel Elliott ran for 33 yards and a touchdown.

Ohio State had no problems with the Spartans last season when they came to Columbus for a 38-3 win in which now Syracuse quarterback Kyle McCord threw for 335 yards and three touchdowns, two of those scores going to Marvin Harrison Jr.

Day, Knowles Want Hicks On Field

Ohio State junior linebacker C.J. Hicks was on the losing end of the offseason competition between him and Sonny Styles for the starting Will linebacker role, but that doesn't mean the Buckeyes have stopped trying to get him on the field.

Speaking during Ohio State's "developmental week" on Sept. 10, Day said that he and his staff have had conversations about potentially moving the former five-star Hicks closer to the line of scrimmage in more of a defensive end role, although they still believe he can excel at his natural linebacker position.

"We have had conversations, but we need C.J., right now, to play linebacker," Day said. "There are certain things that right now he is doing better than others. We need to find the consistency there that we believe that he can do at linebacker. Although we have a few guys already, he needs to be a part of that group."

"Because if you're playing with three line-

backers in a game, all it takes is one injury and you're right in the middle of it. This is a long season."

Hicks, who came into Ohio State as a highly touted five-star prospect in the 2022 class, has struggled to find consistent playing time with the Buckeyes. He appeared mostly on special teams in his first two seasons, totaling 14 tackles in 25 games, before making an unsuccessful run at Ohio State's starting Will linebacker job over the offseason, losing the battle to Styles toward the end of fall camp.

Hicks' role has increased in 2024, recording 10 tackles and one sack in three games as either a reserve or a third linebacker in special packages. But his role at linebacker may be dwindling moving forward this season due to the emergence of Arvell Reese, who has inserted himself into the starting lineup at times after excelling at fall camp.

Hicks had two tackles against Marshall.

Defensive coordinator Jim Knowles slightly pushed back on Day's claim that conversations have been had about moving Hicks closer to the line of scrimmage, but he did not rule out the potential switch from happening this season, especially if the Buckeyes' front four is hit with the injury bug later in the year.

"We haven't discussed that, because C.J. is still developing very well and he's considered very much a mix with those guys at linebacker," Knowles said. "But I've said it before, it's always in the back of my mind, because I think he has those gifts and tools to be able to do something like that."

"He has to improve, he has to continue to grow," Day said of Hicks. "We've seen him do it. We know that he can do it. It's just the consistency part of it. So we believe in C.J. in a big way. I know James (Laurinaitis) and everybody in that room is trying to get him there because we want and need him to play linebacker."

Knowles Encouraged By Safety Depth

In a unit full of multiple talented difference makers at nearly every position on the defense, it's tough to find an area of concern for Knowles. But during the offseason, he was a little restless over the depth at safety.

"It goes back to safety depth," Knowles said on Aug. 15 when asked if there were any glaring issues with the defense going into the team's second scrimmage on Aug. 17. "We feel good about our starters, but the guys behind there – we have two guys who were unproven and still learning. Every day in practice is a learning experience for them and a challenge, particularly if they get to go against our best receivers. So our safety depth needs to come along."

Knowles' concerns were largely regarding the lack of experience behind starters Caleb Downs and Lathan Ransom, with players such as sophomore Malik Hartford, true freshman



ACCURATE

CONTRACTING SERVICES

(614) 921-1400

accuratecontracting.net
info@accuratecontracting.net
 3999 Parkway Lane, Suite 1
 Hilliard, Ohio 43026

We have a passion for creating spaces!



RETAIL

Attention to detail is our forte! Dream big, and let us build it. Quality is our priority. Upgrade your retail center now.

COMMERCIAL

We believe that every commercial space has the potential to be extraordinary. Let us help you bring your vision to life.

ASSISTED LIVING

Independent living or skilled nursing facility, our goal is to see our clients satisfied and their residents enjoying their new living spaces.

A Temporary Solution To BSB Mail Problems

Any Buckeye Sports Bulletin reader has either experienced delivery problems in the last few weeks or read about it enough to know that the recent mail service has been problematic and has shown little sign of getting better.

We remind you that the complete edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is posted online at BuckeyeSports.com immediately upon completion and before the paper even hits the mail. We encourage readers to take advantage of this free service while waiting for their paper to arrive.

"We fully understand that reading the paper online is not a substitute for having your BSB in your hands," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "But it gives you a chance to read the stories you want to read immediately while waiting for your paper to arrive."

And there is much more on BuckeyeSports.com than just the complete copy of the paper.

BuckeyeSports.com will be with you every day this football season, from the opening win over Akron to the CFP national championship game in Atlanta on Jan. 20, 2025.

The BSB staff will be reporting from every press conference or other availability throughout football season, and the news is available in real time at BuckeyeSports.com.

BuckeyeSports.com also offers plenty of additional

content not found in your paper. Along with daily posts and additional features, we offer reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Football season marked the return of the always entertaining Staff Predictions, which appear the Friday before every game.

Staff members also man the Fan Forum, where the discussion between staff and readers is always lively, and is more so during football season.

If you are not already taking advantage of BuckeyeSports.com, 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 (614) 486-2202 and we will help you gain access. If you have any questions about BuckeyeSports.com or your mail service, feel free to call us at the above number.

BSB is also offering the opportunity to upgrade your subscription to first class mail during football season. See the box on page 6.

Day Wants Downs To Stay At Safety

Speaking of safeties, it appears as though Downs will almost certainly not become a two-way player for the Buckeyes. Downs was originally named as a candidate to get snaps at the running back position when Day said in the summer that Downs had gotten some reps at that position and even spent time in the position room meetings with the backs.

Any chance of that happening seems very unlikely now that the Buckeyes are three games into the season.

"I think right now we're focused on Caleb being the best safety in America and doing his job there," Day said. "He's still working as a punt returner. I don't think we're right quite there where we need to get involved with him in the run game just yet. Not that we won't as the season goes on."

Downs' practice time at the running back position first took place at the beginning of the year, when the team had plenty of question marks behind starting running backs Quinshon Judkins and Treveyan Henderson on the depth chart. That need only became more pressing when junior walk-on running back TC Caffey went down with a season-ending knee injury over the summer.

Since then, true freshman running backs James Peoples and Sam Williams-Dixon have performed well when they received time in the Buckeyes' blowout wins.

The young duo ran for a combined 91 yards in the Western Michigan game, and Peoples scored two touchdowns in his first two games. Peoples had 31 more yards against the Thun-

Continued On Page 6

Jaylen McClain and junior safety Keenan Nelson Jr. appearing in just nine combined games for the Buckeyes – all by Hartford last year.

But after Ohio State's first two games, Knowles sang a different tune, saying during the developmental week that he is more comfortable with Ohio State's backup safeties, especially the insurance policy of McClain and

Hartford.

"(Hartford and McClain) are coming along," Knowles said. "They've been showing up, doing all the right things, playing hard, making the checks and making plays when their number is called. The more reps we can get them, the better. Football is a tough game, it's a long season, and we need them."

Hartford and McClain each earned playing time toward the end of Ohio State's first two blowout wins of the season, recording a combined three tackles and a tackle for loss, and they continued to earn second-half reps against Marshall. McClain had two total tackles, including one solo tackle, and Hartford also had one total tackle.

GAME DAY
READY?
No worries...
We can get you there.

RECEIVE **10% OFF** ALL OSU PRODUCTS.*
Mention code BuckeyePride24 at checkout.



Visit us at
4567 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43214
or shop online @
FLAGLADYUSA.COM

*Please note some products are in store only



OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

dering Herd on six carries.

Burke Calls "BS" On Targeting Ejection

Ohio State senior cornerback Denzel Burke had a much more abbreviated appearance in the team's Week 2 win against Western Michigan than he would have liked after being disqualified late in the first quarter for targeting.

Burke's disqualification came when he lowered his helmet to tackle Western Michigan running back Jaden Nixon, although replays appeared to show that the preseason AP

All-America cornerback hit Nixon with the side of his helmet rather than the crown.

The senior voiced his displeasure with the ruling during his first media appearance since the foul on Sept. 20, a press conference that began with him asking reporters not to ask him about the ejection and saying "there's no point in talking about it.

"It was a bullcrap call. I really didn't understand it," Burke said. "It's kind of been going around the country, really. I saw one, I think it was Florida and (Texas A&M), and that was a bad call too. It's kind of just getting out of hand, and then the fact that you're out the whole game and the player's not even hurt or anything like that."

As a senior, Burke has only so many more opportunities to shine in front of his home fans, which is why the disqualification was especially maddening for him.

"It's never a good feeling, especially because it's my last year," Burke said. "I'm trying to take advantage of every opportunity I have, and just being out the first half kind of sucked, but it's part of the game."

Burke's frustration didn't prevent him from being a good teammate, though. Thanks to a 2020 rule change, he was able to stay on the sidelines, where he said he supported his team-

BSB Offering Reduction In First-Class Mail Rate

For a limited time, Buckeye Sports Bulletin is offering a discount on the cost of a subscription upgrade to first class mail during football season or through football recruiting season in February. The first class upgrade for football season, regularly \$30, will be just \$26, and the upgrade through the traditional National Signing Day in February will be just \$36, down from \$40.

"We think we can offset the cost of this discount with a reduction in the number of replace-

ment papers we have to send out and a reduction in the number of subscriptions we have been losing because of untimely delivery," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said.

To take advantage of this offer, send your check or credit card information (don't forget your security code) to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Credit card orders are accepted 24 hours a day at (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862.

mates in any way that he could.

"Really just being the leader, supporting my teammates, making sure they're taking advantage of their play opportunities, and just being that vocal leader on the sidelines and lifting their energy up," Burke said when asked about

how he remained calm after being disqualified.

Burke's ejection appeared to leave the senior frustrated, and Day had a similar, albeit much less colorful, response when asked about the call.

"I did get an explanation on the call and I think there were a couple of different opinions of that after the game," Day said. "I guess that's all I can really say."

Knowles said it could serve as a reminder for his players to tackle with their heads up rather than leading with their helmets.

"Anything we can learn is to keep your head up," Knowles said. "The natural tendency is to kind of drop your head. I think that you can eliminate a lot of errors and potential injuries if you just see what you hit and keep your head up."

Burke was able to stay on the field for the entire game against Marshall, recording six total tackles.

Day Watches CFB From Couch During Off Week

On Sept. 14, Day wasn't on the sidelines in Ohio Stadium leading the Buckeyes in his headset and scarlet and gray attire, but in his home spending time with his family since his team had an off week. That is, at least until college football games started.

During those games that he gets to watch from the comfort of his couch at home, Day doesn't just turn his brain off, but he tries to put himself into other coaches' shoes during the games he watches.

"Every time it's the end of the half, every time it's a decision you made, every time it's the end of the game, you're putting yourself in that situation," Day said. "I'm actually saying it out loud sometimes. RJ (Day's son) and my wife, they'll be talking to me about it because I'm just constantly talking. 'If this thing goes down to this down and distance, would we go for it right here? Is this a timeout situation? What exactly is going on here?'"

Even with as much extra work as Day gives himself during an off week, he will still take all the help he can get in making the difficult decisions given to a head coach throughout the game. With new clock rules having been implemented in college football for 2024 season such as the two-minute timeout, there are even more moving parts at play for coaches to consider.

"When you're watching a game live, there's different variables that come into play. We have hired a consultant as an analytics group to give us information," Day said. "So they'll give us some of the situations on a week-to-week

Brutus Level VIPs To Be Recognized

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 an upcoming football 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 43 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 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," a \$10 gift card from College Traditions, as well as a card from either Rusty Bucket or Cameron Mitchell restaurants good for \$10 off your next food purchase.

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: Roger Albrecht, Columbus; B2, Reston, Va.; Fredrick Bradshaw, Columbus; Brian Bucher, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.; Thomas E. Farish, Port St. Lucie, Fla.; Terry T. Farmer, Lancaster, Ohio; Sander Flaum, New York; Mike Heilmann, Ashland, Ohio; Freddie and Joe Huber, Walpole, Mass.; Gregory Jones, Calabasas, Calif.; Don Kersey, Springboro, Ohio; Kris Kersey, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Fred Krisch, Cleveland; Larry Larson, Ladera Ranch, Calif.; Dan LaVille, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jerry Lawhun, Rio Verde, Ariz.; Alan Lord, Reynoldsburg, Ohio; W. Lee

Mackewiz O.D., Bear, Del.; Allen McMillin Jr., Logan, Ohio; Jeff Montgomery, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.; In memory of Hugh and Dixie Rea, Washington Court House, Ohio; In memory of Lisa Rea, Greenfield, Ohio; Bob Redfield, Dublin, Ohio; Jim Reichler, Toledo; The Russell Group United, Columbus; Jim Shindler, Sylvania, Ohio; John Thomas, Kentfield, Calif.; Jm Walton, Naples, Fla.; Bob Weber, Mishawaka, Ind.; Richard Yoss, Woodsfield, Ohio.

Elite Donors: Robert Ankerman, Holland, Mich.; Marshall Beck, Sarasota, Fla.; Phillip Blue, Prior Lake, Minn.; In memory of Norwin Brovitz, Oakmont, Pa.; David Cobb, Tipp City, Ohio; Iris Cremean, Walbridge, Ohio; Bob Doyle, Beavercreek, Ohio; Richard Dunkelberger, Groveport, Ohio; Fred Fingerhut, Phoenix; Chalk Fry DDS, Sarasota, Fla.; Raminder Gill, Colusa, Calif.; Laura Granich, Columbus; Paul E. Hackett, The Villages, Fla.; James Hamilton, Murrysville, Pa.; Joe Helmer, Westerville, Ohio; Curtis High, Beavercreek, Ohio; Carl R. Jeffery DDS, Van Wert, Ohio; Frank Klaus, Pepper Pike, Ohio; John Krepop, The Villages, Fla.; Paul Lappert, Columbus; Tom Leggett, Dublin, Ohio; Brian Livingston, Louisville, Ky.; Dr. Jonathan Lucas, Portsmouth, Ohio; Robert Maddux, Cincinnati; George Massad, Bowling Green, Ohio; Mike from Marietta, Ga.; Col. George R. Nelson, New Albany, Ohio; 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.; Dr. Earl Strimple, Washington, D.C.; James Thomas, The Villages, Fla.; Chuck Underwood, Miamisburg, Ohio; Dan van Blaricom, Dublin, Ohio; Beth Wachsmann, Columbus; Elliott S. Wettstein, Waverly, Ohio; J.D. Wientjes, Peoria, Ill.; Kenny Wright, Westerville, Ohio; David J. Young, Supply, N.C.; Edwin Zechman Jr., Sarasota, Fla.; Anonymous, Columbus; Anonymous, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Anonymous, Lancaster, Ohio; Anonymous, Lewisburg, W.Va.

Scarlet VIPS: William Adams, Willoughby, Ohio; Anthony Ananthanarayanan, Rochester, Mich.; Greg Brooks, Gahanna, Ohio; Marty Brumbaugh, Troy, Ohio; Donald Collins, Kenton, Ohio; Joseph A. Cusma Sr., Massillon, Ohio; Dennis Dahm, Sandusky, Ohio; Julie Ellis, Apple Valley, Calif.; Mike Freeburn, Columbus; Tom Goila, Cincinnati; Dave Hamilton, Canton, Ohio; Richard G. Hannan Jr., Chillicothe, Ohio; Doug Harris, Lima, Ohio; Ed Helal, Ashland, Ohio; Phil Helal, Strongsville, Ohio; Dave Palmer, Washington, Mich.; Theodore Pegram, Eden Prairie, Minn.; Lawrence Romanoff, Powell, Ohio; Jim Shaw, Lake Forest, Calif.; Dr. William Thomas, Gallipolis, Ohio; Anonymous, Dallas; Anonymous, Gaffney, S.C.; Anonymous, Girard, Ohio; Anonymous, Norwalk, Ohio.

basis on what happened the week before, and they give us feedback on the decisions that we made. That's been helpful."

To this point in the season, Day and the Buckeyes haven't been pressed with a critical late-game situation, and the team likely won't be in a must-convert two-minute drill for at least a few more weeks, but Day understands that at some point, the team will likely need to rise to the occasion in a late-game situation.

"We mixed in two-minute (drills in practice). We had some seven-on-seven two minute. We had some team two-minute because all of those things are coming," Day said. "First half two-minute, we haven't hit on that yet. We know we want to do a better job of that on offense but also on defense."

Day even cited a specific example that he saw while he was watching football during his off week that he said the team had a conversation about. Up 18-15 over the Atlanta Falcons in an NFL Monday Night Football game on Sept. 16, the Philadelphia Eagles had a third-and-3 from the Falcons' 10-yard line. With 1:46 to go, the Eagles decided to throw the ball in an attempt to pick up the first down and effectively end the game. But the pass was dropped by the current Eagles' and former Penn State running back Saquon Barkley, and the clock stopped before they kicked a field goal to go up by six points. The Falcons then went down the field to score a game-winning touchdown drive to win 22-21.

"Coming up from watching some of these games, even like the game that happened last night, there was a two-minute there at the end," Day said. "Even the conversation that we had about, if we're in that situation, what would we do? We're constantly talking out those types of things and then trying to design them in practice so that we're ready when they happen because, as we all know, they're coming."

Day Happy To See McCord, Ewers Succeed

McCord has turned the heads of many through his first three starts with Syracuse, completing 86 of his 127 passes (67.7 percent) for 1,074 yards and 10 touchdowns while leading the Orange to a 2-1 record.

Among those who have been impressed by McCord's early performance with the Orange is his former head coach in Columbus, who said on Sept. 10 that he has kept tabs on the now-Syracuse gunslinger and is happy to see him succeed.

"He's off to a great start," Day said when asked about McCord. "I've only seen a few highlights, and it looks like he's doing a great job. It looks like the first couple of games he's gotten in a good rhythm and got a good win (against Georgia Tech). So I'm happy to see him doing well so far this season."

McCord transferred to Syracuse last December after starting each of Ohio State's 12 regular-season games last season, completing 229 of his 348 pass attempts (65.8 percent) for 3,170 yards and 24 touchdowns to six interceptions while leading the Buckeyes to an 11-1 record.

McCord has seemingly taken his game to another level at Syracuse after being developed under Day at Ohio State, which was most evident during the Orange's 31-28 upset victory over then No. 23 Georgia Tech on Sept. 7 where he threw for four touchdowns and 381 passing yards, and the same can be said for another former Buckeye quarterback, Texas' Quinn Ewers.

Ewers, the No. 1-ranked high school prospect in the 2021 class, had just one season in Columbus while serving as a reserve to start-

er C.J. Stroud before transferring to the Longhorns that offseason. He has since become one of the top quarterbacks in college football, leading the Longhorns to the College Football Playoff last year and more recently throwing for 246 yards and three touchdowns on the road against Michigan in a 31-12 victory on Sept. 7.

Ewers' 2024 season has been temporarily put on pause, though, after he suffered an oblique strain during Texas' 56-7 win over UTSA on Sept. 14 that kept him out of the top-ranked Longhorns' Week 4 game against Louisiana Monroe.

Regardless of the injury, Day said that although it is "a lot different" seeing his former quarterbacks find success at other schools in this transfer portal era, he ultimately believes the success of McCord and Ewers serves as an overall positive for his program, especially when it comes to recruiting.

"I think that's one of the reasons in recruiting that – we sell that to guys, too," Day said. "When you come to Ohio State, you're going to get developed at a high level at every position. But at quarterback, I take a lot of pride in that, in the fact that we develop guys at a high level. Even if you were to leave – we don't want you to leave – but even if you were to leave it's still time well spent and invested. So you're happy when guys go on and do well, even though you want to retain as many guys as you can. That's our whole culture. But that's just the way of the world."

"So I'm happy to see Kyle do well. He won some great games here and poured a lot of effort into the program. We follow those guys and want to support them."

The feeling seems to be mutual with McCord, who suffered his first loss with the Orange on Sept. 20, falling 26-24 at home against Stanford. McCord wasn't quite as good as he'd been in his first two games, completing 27 of 42 passes for 339 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions.

"I appreciate all of them," McCord said on the "Rise and Schein" podcast with Sirius XM's Adam Schein on Sept. 18. "I still root for Ohio State. I have a lot of friends who are still on the team. I still talk to a few of the coaches. I still root for them and I'm cheering those guys on. On my end, there's nothing but love for the Buckeyes."

OSU To Build '1922 Club' At Ohio Stadium

Ohio State announced on Sept. 10 that it is building an "exclusive, private club venue" in Ohio Stadium that aims to "offer a unique way to experience Ohio State football game days and the university campus."

The venue, called "1922 Club," honoring the year Ohio Stadium opened its doors, will be constructed inside the east side of Ohio Stadium with the goal of opening as soon as 2026. The club is described by Ohio State as a "spacious lounge-like atmosphere enriched with the historic culture of Ohio State, upscale food and beverage options and a unique, climate-controlled gameday experience."

The club's full gameday membership, which costs \$4,500, will feature:

- All-inclusive food, beer and wine;
- Cash bar for spirits;
- 1922 Club access three hours prior to kickoff and for one hour after the game;
- Private restrooms;
- A dedicated, premier entrance;
- Opportunities to host private events at a discount on non-game days;
- Presale ticket access for events at Ohio Stadium;
- Access to exclusive, members-only spe-

cial events;

- Options to make reservations at the 1922 Club Restaurant on non-game days; and
- A dedicated sales and service account executive.

The club is also offering social memberships for non-game days, where the venue will transform into the "1922 Club Restaurant." These memberships will cost \$1,000 and feature:

- Opportunities to make reservations at the 1922 Club Restaurant Tuesday through Saturday;
- Opportunities to host private events at a discount on non-game days;
- Presale ticket access for events at Ohio Stadium;
- Members-only special events throughout the year;
- Limited edition merchandise; and
- A dedicated sales and service account executive

Fields Still Starting For Steelers

Former Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields was still the Pittsburgh Steelers' starting quarterback for their Week 3 matchup against Jim Harbaugh and the Los Angeles Chargers. Fields, who has started in place of injured presumed starter Russell Wilson, has performed admirably as the Steelers' signal caller.

The Steelers won the game against the Chargers 20-10 to improve to 3-0 for the season, with Fields completing 25 of 32 passes for 245 yards, a touchdown and an interception, while also rushing for another score.

In an 18-10 win over the Falcons in Week 1, Fields completed 17 of 23 passes for 156 yards

and a touchdown and added 57 yards on 14 carries with his legs.

Fields didn't have to do as much in the Steelers' 13-6 win over the Broncos in Week 2 when he completed 13 of 20 passes for 117 yards while rushing for 27 yards on eight carries.

Wilson, who has missed the team's first three games with a calf strain, has been limited in practice and been available to the Steelers during games as an emergency quarterback. Until Wilson gets back to 100 percent, it will be Fields' opportunity to shine as the team's quarterback.

Having been traded to the Steelers by the Chicago Bears – the team that drafted him in the 2021 NFL draft with the 11th overall pick – for a conditional sixth-round pick, Fields is grateful for his new opportunity.

"It's definitely a blessing here," Fields said. "It was kind of bittersweet when I first got here, but I was happy to come to an organization like this, and I couldn't be happier now. So I'm just glad to get the opportunity to go out there Sunday onto the field and hope to come out with a few more wins."

Former Bucks Punter Johnston Out For Season

Former Ohio State punter Cameron Johnston had his season cut short in the Steelers' season-opening win on Sept. 8 against the Falcons when he was run into by the Falcons' wide receiver KhaDarel Hodge. The play was not ruled as roughing the punter since Hodge was blocked into Johnston and the contact wasn't intentional.

Johnston, who was with the Buckeyes from

Continued On Page 8

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

Home & Away Games!

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

Continued From Page 7

2013-16, has been in the NFL since 2017. He was an All-Big Ten selection in his junior and senior seasons with the Buckeyes, including being the Big Ten punter of the year in 2016 when he had 56 kicks for an average of 46.7 yards.

Johnston was the NFL leader in punting yards in 2021, with his previous team, the Houston Texans, with 88 punts for an average of 46.7 yards, a long of 69 yards and 37 boots inside the 20.

Johnston, who had previously signed a three-year \$9-million contract with Pittsburgh, was placed on the injured reserve on Sept. 10.

Hall Gets Probation, Fine After Pleading No Contest

Former Ohio State and current Cleveland Browns defensive tackle Michael Hall Jr. pleaded no contest to a reduced charge of disorderly conduct in a Sept. 19 court hearing stemming from his August domestic violence arrest.

As a result, Hall received a \$250 fine, two years of probation and a suspended 30-day jail sentence. He will not have to serve jail time unless he violates his probation.

Hall was arrested the night of Aug. 12 after reportedly engaging in a physical confrontation with his fiancée over the "financial needs" for Hall's fiancée's daughter, who is not Hall's biological child.

According to the police report later obtained by the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram, the altercation escalated to a point where Hall pointed a gun to his fiancée's temple, saying, "I will f—end it all," and dragged her along the porch and driveway of their home. Hall's fiancée later recanted the allegation that Hall held a gun to her head and asked for the charges to be dropped.

Police did seize a pair of guns from the residence the night of the altercation, and they also found scrapes on Hall's fiancée's arm.

According to The Athletic, Hall's fiancée was in attendance during the hearing held in Avon Lake Municipal Court but opted not to speak.

Hall appeared in court alongside his attorney, Kevin Spellacy, who said that his client entered counseling and is making progress, according to his therapist.

"I regret the whole situation," Hall told Judge Allison Manning during the hearing. "I wish it never happened. (I'm) just taking those steps and receiving counseling and just trying to better myself."

Hall, a second-round draft selection by the Browns in the 2024 NFL draft after playing three seasons at Ohio State, could now be cleared to play by the NFL after the ruling. But as BSB went to press he remained on the commissioner's exempt list.

The NFL continues to conduct its own investigation of the case.

"We have been closely monitoring all developments in the matter which remains under review of the personal conduct policy," a spokesperson said.

Hall, who did play two preseason games with Cleveland, has missed the first three games of the Browns' 2024 NFL season while he awaits a decision from the league. The former Buckeye has been allowed inside the Browns' facility, but he is prohibited from practicing.

Proctor Joins Staff At High School Alma Mater

Former Ohio State safety Josh Proctor tried

his hand in the NFL before being released by the Jacksonville Jaguars this summer, but that doesn't mean he is finished with his football journey.

Proctor has joined the coaching staff at his alma mater, Owasso (Okla.) High School, where he will serve as a defensive assistant for the Rams during the 2024 football season.

Before playing six years at Ohio State and one summer with the Jaguars, Proctor was a standout on both sides of the ball at Owasso. During his high school career he rushed for 318 yards and four touchdowns and added 19 receptions for 199 yards and a touchdown on offense, while totaling 40 total tackles, five interceptions and two pick-sixes on defense.

Proctor's do-it-all skill set with the Rams allowed him to emerge as a highly-touted high school prospect in the 2018 class, where he earned 13 offers and was ranked the nation's 71st-best overall prospect, seventh-best safety and No. 2 player out of Oklahoma. He was projected to enroll with the Sooners but ultimately chose the Buckeyes, committing to then-Urban Meyer-led Ohio State in April 2017.

Proctor played six seasons at Ohio State, gaining one extra year because of a medical redshirt and another with a COVID-19 redshirt. He totaled 112 tackles (6½ for loss), 17 pass deflections, three interceptions and a fumble recovery across 53 career appearances. His best year came as the Buckeyes' starting adjuster safety in 2023, where he totaled a career-high 47 tackles, four tackles for loss, nine pass deflections and an interception returned for a touchdown.

Proctor's strong sixth-year senior season caused him to earn some NFL buzz last offseason, which landed him a spot with the Jaguars as an undrafted free agent, signing with the franchise hours after the 2024 NFL draft concluded.

Proctor's time in Jacksonville was short lived, however, as he was waived by the franchise on Aug. 27.

Hamilton, Judkins, Styles Jr. Players Of Game VS. WMU

The Ohio State coaching staff is unlikely to have more Player of the Game candidates from a single contest all season. In the Buckeyes' 56-0 win over Western Michigan, everything seemed to go right. Judkins, Ty Hamilton and senior cornerback Lorenzo Styles Jr. were no exception to that.

With an extremely efficient 108-yard performance on nine carries and two touchdowns – which could've been even better if not for a penalty that took away what would have been an 80-yard touchdown – it almost feels like Judkins should have graded out higher than the 94 percent given to him by the coaching staff. Regardless of his grade, Judkins put the explosiveness that seemed routine for him on display against Western Michigan.

Without any forced turnovers against Western Michigan, there wasn't necessarily a particular player who won the game or kept the unit's shutout intact, but rather a formidable collective effort from a plethora of Buckeye difference-makers. From the interior of Ohio State's defense, Hamilton was as solid as he always is against the run, tying a team high with four total tackles, but on Sept. 7, he was also a contributor as a pass rusher.

Williams and Hamilton combined to sack Western Michigan starting quarterback Hayden Wolff on third-and-12 to get the Buckeyes off the field. Hamilton easily graded out as a champion in the game at 96 percent.

Although maybe not as sharp in the return game as they had been in Week 1, the Buck-

eyes had a solid performance on special teams. The veteran Styles, who transferred from Notre Dame last season, made perhaps the most notable play on special teams, laying down a hit on Western Michigan returner Jaden Nixon after a short 15-yard return at the 20-yard line.

Styles appeared in 22 plays both in special teams and in coverage on defense.

Smith Receives Praise From NFL QB Cousin

Ohio State true freshman wide receiver Jeremiah Smith has received a lot of high praise and accolades since his football playing career started. Being the highest-rated wide receiver prospect in 247Sports history out of high school, the first true freshman to be named an Iron Buckeye since it was implemented under Meyer, and the earliest player to have his black stripe removed since the tradition began all pales in comparison to the praise Smith received from his older cousin and starting quarterback of the Seattle Seahawks, Geno Smith.

"I've seen a lot of great receivers, and I've also had the chance to watch JJ since he was 10 years old," Geno Smith said in a video posted by CBS Sports. "He's going to be the best receiver ever. I really believe that. I was in the house. I was watching the whole Akron game. When he caught that first touchdown, I jumped right out of my seat. The whole house was going crazy. It was good to see that. I thought he had a heck of a game. I thought he started out a little slow. I know he wants to catch that first one. He would have scored on that one too. Let's go JJ. Great debut. He was born with the talent, but he's putting that work in. He's ready. He's ready right now."

Through three games, Smith has scored four touchdowns and accumulated 281 receiving yards on 14 catches.

Perhaps the "best receiver ever," praise is a touch of favoritism from his cousin, but it isn't just the former West Virginia quarterback who has give him high praise. ESPN analyst Tom Luginbill had a similar but perhaps less extreme sentiment on ESPN's "College Football Live" show.

"Jeremiah Smith is going to go down in my opinion as the greatest receiver to ever play at Ohio State, and he's two games into his career," Luginbill said. "He is on a Julio Jones, A.J. Green type of level when it comes to wide receiver play. He's just too good."

Former Buckeye Lyke Out As Pitt's AD

Former Ohio State assistant athletics director Heather Lyke was removed from her position as the athletic director at Pittsburgh on Sept. 9.

Pittsburgh chancellor Joan Gabel issued a statement regarding the university's decision to remove Lyke from her position.

"Today, I informed University of Pittsburgh director of athletics Heather Lyke that I was making a change in the leadership of our athletics program. Upon her arrival at Pitt in 2017, Heather guided our program through a unique period in college athletics, and we thank her for her leadership during that time.

"Her tenure included successes from football's first ACC championship to volleyball reaching its first-ever NCAA Final Four while representing the University at the conference and national levels. However, as we enter a new era in college athletics, one that seems to change by the day, we need a new vision and a new leader of our athletics department. On behalf of all Panthers, we wish Heather and her family the best with appreciation for their service to Pitt."



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

Lyke served as the Buckeyes' assistant athletic director from 1998-2013 under former Ohio State athletic directors Andy Geiger and Gene Smith.

Lyke got her first start as an athletic director at Eastern Michigan from 2013-17 before being hired by Pittsburgh.

Considering Pitt's sustained success under current football head coach Pat Narduzzi and improvements under basketball head coach Jeff Capel, Lyke's firing came as a bit of a surprise.

According to Paul Zeise of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, the move came out of friction that had developed between Lyke and Gabel.

Zeise reported that Gabel had questioned Lyke's fiscal responsibility and also grew frustrated with her reported interest in other jobs.

Lyke thanked her coaches, staff and student-athletes at Pitt, while boasting some of the university's accomplishments during her tenure, citing the program's number of ACC cham-

pionships increasing during her time at Pitt.

"I take immense pride in the culture we have built within our athletic department, across our campus, and our community. At the end of the day you win with people and our winning-culture is directly attributed to our staff, coaches, donors and fans who have meaningfully impacted Pitt Athletics and our student-athletes for years to come."

NHL's Matsuzaki Talks Stadium Series In Horseshoe

A presale for Ohio State students began on Sept. 19 for the 2025 NHL Stadium Series game between the Columbus Blue Jackets and Detroit Red Wings that will take place at Ohio Stadium on March 1 at 6 p.m.

The NHL is eager to build on the bitter Ohio State-Michigan rivalry for the event, said Dean Matsuzaki, executive vice president for NHL events.

He and his staff arrived in Columbus sever-

al days before the OSU-Marshall game at Ohio Stadium to get an understanding of how the school handles game day.

"We've learned the passion here, and we've learned how much people want to beat a team from up in Michigan as well," Matsuzaki said. "We've heard about the crossing out the M's on campus and things like that, and somebody mentioned to me about crossing out D's for our game. So that was pretty interesting."

"We had a whole group here watching the players walk in (to the stadium) and the skull session and seeing how we can lean into that and lean into the traditions."

Tickets go on sale to the general public on Oct. 4 at 10 a.m. via Ticketmaster.

The capacity has not been set for the Stadium Series, but the fact that Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor had 105,491 for the Winter Classic between the Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs on Jan. 1, 2014, will be a motivation for fans in Columbus to fill Ohio Stadium.

Its capacity is listed as 102,780, but the largest crowd was 110,045 on Nov. 26, 2016, when the Buckeyes beat Michigan.

As of now, the Blue Jackets-Red Wings contest will be the lone game played. The schedules did not work out so that the OSU men's and women's teams could play outdoor games at Ohio Stadium this season, although there have been discussions about hosting games next season.

The men will be in the last weekend of the regular season, and it was felt playing outdoors at that time would be a distraction. The Buckeyes will instead play U-M at Value City Arena on Feb. 27 and 28. The women will be in the WCHA playoffs.

Both programs will play at Wrigley Field in January as part of the Frozen Confines. The men will face Michigan on Jan. 3. The women meet Wisconsin on Jan. 4 in a rematch of the 2024 Frozen Four final won by the Buckeyes for their second national title in three seasons.

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago — 1984

In veteran defensive tackle Dave Morrill's mind, the reason for Ohio State's 44-0 shutout of visiting Washington State on Sept. 15 was simple – hard work.

"We really put in a hard week of work, and it paid off," Morrill said. "We went three hard days instead of two. We ran extra, too. They were three very hot days, and they got us into shape."

Morrill, a senior who was voted Ohio State's defensive lineman of the year in the 1983 season, ended the day with nine tackles – third on the team.

Morrill said coming together as a unit has been another key to Ohio State's successful defensive rebuilding job for the season.

"The whole defense played great today," he said. "I think since we're a young defense, teams come in and say, 'Hey, they've got only three starters returning.' They figure this is their chance. But I think the defensive backfield and the linebackers are exceptional."

35 Years Ago — 1989

Beaten but not defeated. Bloodied but unbowed. Humbled but still determined.

Ohio State's football team absorbed a 42-3 beating from Southern California in the sun-drenched Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Sept. 23, the team's worst loss in 43 years and biggest losing margin on the road in 84 seasons.

Still, the Buckeyes were quick to defend themselves against detractors who might have been quick to compare the beginning of the 1989 season with the beginning of the 1988 campaign.

In 1988, the OSU team started out with a flawless victory over Syracuse only to get badly beaten by Pittsburgh the next game. The 1989 season began with a big victory over Oklahoma State only to be followed by the 39-point loss to USC.

"I still say that was last year and this is this year," said OSU offensive tackle Tim Moxley. "You're talking about two completely different teams. Last year, Pitt lined up and physically beat us. They whipped us in every way."

"This USC team is a much better team this year and they didn't dominate us like Pitt did. Maybe the final score didn't show it today, but we mixed it up with them pretty well for the most part."

30 Years Ago — 1994

When can one team beat another by 24 points and still be downright surly about the outcome?

When you are Ohio State and defeat nonconference rival Pittsburgh 27-3 in your home opener on Sept. 17 while committing five turnovers and nine penalties.

The Buckeyes rolled up 512 yards of total offense with a nice balance of 295 on the ground and 217 through the air. They scored points in every quarter of the game and successfully throttled a Pitt offense that had been averaging 485.5 yards per game, nearly 300 of it on the ground.

But it was the five turnovers – four fumbles and one interception – and the nine costly penalties that turned the temperature of an already oven-like OSU locker room up a few degrees.

"We can't keep on doing ourselves this way," said OSU tailback Eddie George. "Nobody knows more than me the price you pay when you don't hang onto the football. We have to do better than we've been doing. It's as simple as that."

25 Years Ago — 1999

With nearly four decades of his life spent as a college coach, OSU head coach John Cooper had seen just about everything college football had to offer.

He rode into Ohio Stadium Sept. 18 confident in his team's abilities after a 42-20 win over UCLA the week before. His team's game with lightly regarded Ohio University, a member of the

Mid-American Conference, was considered a mere formality.

After all, the Buckeyes were a 43-point favorite.

But even Cooper was not fully prepared to watch his Buckeyes struggle most of the day against OU. The upstart Bobcats actually held a 10-3 second-quarter lead before the Buckeyes woke up in the second half and engineered a 40-16 win.

"This game will make an old man out of you," Cooper said afterward.

Ohio gave its in-state big brother its best shot, confounding the Buckeyes at times with its triple-option offense and stopping OSU cold at key moments defensively.

For a program that was just 5-6 the previous year and was coming off a home loss to Division I-AA Northern Iowa, OU looked more like a middle-of-the-road Big Ten team.

"After the game, I told the kids that I was proud of them," said OU coach Jim Grobe. "People who watched us today know how hard we can play. We made some mistakes, but I can't ask our kids to play any harder."

20 Years Ago — 2004

Once Mike Nugent drove his leg through the ball solidly, one would think even the most doubting of Thomases would consider OSU's 24-21 victory on Sept. 11 a foregone conclusion. Except that after connecting with the pigskin with just two seconds remaining, two thoughts ran through Nugent's mind – and neither of them was good.

The first concerned whether his ball would hang on and sneak inside the left upright.

"I don't know how other guys are when they hit a ball, but every time I hit a solid ball it goes back and forth a little bit," Nugent said. "It kind of scared me at first. First, it was going dead center and it started going back in. I was just telling it to go in, and in that last second, it made it by about two inches."

Nugent's second thought took him back to the previous week's game against Cincinnati, when he barely missed a 53-yarder after initially thinking he had struck a good ball.

"Right when I hit this one, before I picked my head up, it was kind of like that 53-yarder I missed last week," the senior co-captain said. "Before I picked my head up I felt amazing about it, but this one, I kind of sat there before I picked my head up like, 'That felt good, but I missed the last one I thought I felt good on.' I looked up and it was going back and forth. Finally it just snuck in right at the end."

The 55-yard connection was the longest of his career.

15 Years Ago — 2009

Ohio State finished off a week of unrest Sept. 19 by flexing its offensive and defensive muscle during a 38-0 wipeout of in-state rival Toledo at Cleveland Browns Stadium.

Led by sophomore quarterback Terelle Pryor, who threw for three touchdowns and ran for another, the Buckeyes piled up 522 yards of total offense and cracked the 500-yard mark for the first time since a 42-39 win over Michigan in 2006.

Meanwhile the OSU defense pitched its first shutout since a 43-0 win in the 2008 season opener against Youngstown State. It was only the fourth shutout for the Buckeyes since Jim Tressel became head coach in 2001 and the team's first against a Division I-A nonconference opponent since 1998. Toledo was also the victim in that one, dropping a 49-0 decision at Ohio Stadium.

The outcome on both sides of the ball was especially gratifying for the Buckeyes, who were trying to regroup following a narrow 18-15 loss to USC, the program's sixth straight defeat against top-five competition.

"Our kids did a great job of approaching this football game the right way," Tressel said. "Our defense came out of the box, and when you swarm on defense, it gives your offense a lot of

opportunities."

10 Years Ago — 2014

Against Virginia Tech on Sept. 6, the world found out what J.T. Barrett couldn't do – yet. One week later, the Ohio State quarterback showed how good he could be in a 66-0 victory over Kent State in Ohio Stadium.

The level of competition was different, of course, but Barrett's 312-yard, six-touchdown performance still figured to be an important step in the maturation process for the redshirt freshman from Wichita Falls, Texas.

"Game by game, I'm just getting more comfortable, getting that confidence and throwing the ball down the field and things like that," he said. "With everything we do offensively, it helps having game reps compared to just practice."

Barrett left no doubt why the coaching staff praised his ability to distribute the ball and there was not much delay in starting the beat-down.

On the Buckeyes' first play from scrimmage, Barrett froze a Kent State defender before delivering an option pitch to running back Ezekiel Elliott, who picked up 4 yards. Four plays and two complete passes later, he calmly surveyed the field against a Golden Flash blitz and found Michael Thomas wide open on a short pass route over the middle for a touchdown.

Five Years Ago — 2019

Back in the same stadium in which he made his college debut two seasons prior, Ohio State junior running back J.K. Dobbins rushed for 193 yards and one touchdown and added another score through the air in a 51-10 win at Indiana on Sept. 14.

Dobbins burst onto the scene as a true freshman by rushing for 181 yards on 29 carries in the Buckeyes' 2017 season-opening win over the Hoosiers and nearly bested that effort in the first half of this game.

The highlight of Dobbins' day was his 26-yard touchdown run in the second quarter, as he ran around the left side of the offensive line, turned upfield, weaved his way through several defenders, stiff-armed another and barreled his way into the end zone.

"I think it's just a play that shows what I can really do," Dobbins said after the game. "I think a lot of people forgot what I can do, so I just want to keep showing that, keep getting better."

One Year Ago — 2023

It took about five months longer than head coach Ryan Day would have hoped, but he was finally able to name Ohio State's starting quarterback for the season on Sept. 12, bestowing that honor upon junior signal caller Kyle McCord.

"After reviewing the film, we've decided that Kyle is going to be the starter and (we wanted) to make that distinction," Day said. "We still plan on playing Devin (Brown), but we feel like Kyle has really stepped up and deserves to be the starter."

Day had initially said he hoped to name a starter by the end of Ohio State's spring practice, and then during fall camp, and then before the season opener at Indiana. The Buckeyes missed all of those deadlines, leading to a drawn-out competition between McCord and Brown, a redshirt freshman, that extended through the first two games of the season.

And through that process, Day and the coaching staff were able to settle on McCord due to his "overall consistency" dating back to the spring.

"He made some nice throws," Day said after the 63-10 win over Western Kentucky. "He kept the offense going. He came out of the gates playing efficient football, and that's what we're going to look for moving forward. But I would just say overall consistency."

RB Coach Locklyn Lends Expertise To Backs

Continued From Page 1

a lot of third downs. We stay on schedule. When you can present a balanced attack like we did today, it opens a lot of things up.”

Judkins was the one who stood out the most this time around, running for 173 yards on his own, and every single one of those was earned. It seemed like every time the ball was in his hands, he was bouncing off defenders, breaking tackles and finding wide gaps to break off a long run.

After missing out on an 80-yard touchdown against Western Michigan due to a holding call that brought the play back, Judkins converted again from long distance against the Herd, taking a handoff early in the second quarter from the left hash mark through the middle of his blockers at the line and speeding past the secondary before tumbling into the end zone for an 86-yard score.

That run tied for the third longest in Ohio State history with J.T. Barrett's dash to score against Minnesota in a 31-24 win in Minneapolis on Nov. 15, 2014, where the conditions were much different than the scorcher in Columbus, with the temperature reaching just 15 degrees at kickoff with light snow falling. It also goes down as Judkins' longest in his college career. He said that all he was thinking about when he saw the hole open up was that he wanted to finish it.

“Score. That's really my mindset,” Jud-

kins said.

Judkins gave credit to new running backs coach Carlos Locklyn, whom head coach Ryan Day hired away from Oregon over the offseason. Locklyn has brought an aggressive mentality to the running backs room that has bled into every part of the offense. Judkins also said that Locklyn has been a big help when it comes to reading defenses.

“I want to give a big shout-out to Coach Lock,” Judkins said, “because of the way he teaches the whole room and how he goes through progressions in practice and different things when it comes to going through our progressions and reading linebackers. I want to give a big thanks to him because he's helped the whole room improve as a whole.”

“I was just going through my progressions and my reads,” Judkins said of his touchdown. “I saw the linebackers come out of their gaps in overflow, so I hit the hole and I was gone.”

Henderson also showed off with some very tough runs, most notably his 40-yard touchdown rush that started the scoring in the second half. It included an authoritative stiff-arm that sent Marshall linebacker Landyn Watson to the turf before Henderson broke away for the score. Judkins did the same thing to the same defender on his 6-yard touchdown run to the outside in the fourth quarter, slamming Watson to the ground before finding the end zone.

Both Henderson and Judkins showed throughout the game that even though they have the speed to break off a long play, they also have the power necessary to force their way into the open field if needed.

It's a mindset that both running backs need to have, and one that Locklyn preaches to the entire group, something they seem to have taken to heart.

“The mindset of me and my teammates as a whole is to play with bad intentions,” Judkins said. “That's my mindset when I get the ball. I'm going to do my job at the end of the day. I'm going to get the first down. I'm going to try to score. Every time I get the ball I'm going to make the most of it.”

In the past few seasons, Henderson was the focal point of the Buckeye rushing offense. There was no threat that either Kyle McCord or C.J. Stroud would break off a run. When Henderson was dealing with injuries the past two years, the depth at the position behind him was mostly serviceable, but it wasn't enough to win big games that Henderson missed.

It also didn't help last season that the Buckeyes' offensive line was replacing three starters who had each gone to the NFL, making it tougher for the rushing attack to find holes to run through.

But now with Judkins in the backfield, Henderson can stay fresher and doesn't have to take on the full workload that comes with being the best runner on the team. With another year of experience, the offensive line has also made big strides with the help of Alabama graduate transfer center Seth McLaughlin, who Day said has been an invaluable addition to the offense for multiple reasons.

“I think it's been everything,” Day said about what has spurred the run-blocking growth. “Seth has done a great job of getting everybody on the same page. He's like having an NFL center in there. He is. When you go into a meeting and you see something, he's got the answer or he's going to get it fixed. In-game, he's talking to those guys. He's just a calming presence. Then when you add Donovan (Jackson) in there, it strengthens it even more.”

Jackson missed the first two games of the season with an undisclosed injury but made his return against Marshall, and the difference was obvious. In game one against Akron, running up the middle proved to be a much taller task for the Buckeyes. Redshirt freshman Austin Siereveld, who took Jackson's place at left guard in those two games, and redshirt sophomore Tegra Tshabola were making their first starts and had some growing pains to work through, but against the Herd those problems were few and far between.

“You saw the offensive line rocking off the ball today,” Howard said. “They were getting up to the second level very fast. With the way that their front was set up, we felt like Seth and some of the tackles could work up to the second level really quickly. I think our guards got really good movement. Those guys were getting up to the second level well, and our running backs were doing an unbelievable job of reading things.”

Day still believes that there are improvements that they can make on the offensive

line, especially with conference play and tougher competition coming Ohio State's way the rest of the season. But he seemed pleased with what he saw in game three from the offensive line, the running backs and the quarterback in the run game.

“Not everything is perfect and we're going to see a lot different competition moving forward once we get into conference play and down the road. We're not making any kind of judgments right now, but you go off what you see and you're seeing improvement there. That's a good sign.”

“I do think the running backs have a big part of it. You watch the film. ‘Are they running hard?’ The answer is yes. Then Will making good decisions, either having the ability to pull it when appropriate or making the decision to throw the ball out on the perimeter with the receivers blocking is critical. If your receivers don't block when you have some of those things, those plays don't work. Those are extensions of the run game, even though they don't always show.”

As Day said, and has been predicted since Howard transferred to Ohio State, his rushing ability adds another aspect that defenses are forced to take into account. When that is joined with the talented receivers they have and Howard's willingness to throw the long ball, it creates holes in opposing defenses that could make the Buckeyes' backfield impossible to stop.

Even if Howard's passing ability isn't up to the Ohio State standard, which is not something that has been the case early on, his ability and fearlessness running the ball make it very tough to scheme a defense against the Buckeyes. Cornerback Jordan Hancock said as much about Marshall, which had its quarterbacks run the ball a total of 14 times for 32 yards, allowing the Herd to extend a few drives.

“What made them a challenge was they were getting funky splits, formations, communications and stuff like that we have to fix,” Hancock said. “Just the quarterback being live with the run, that plays a huge part of it also.”

Day is hoping his quarterback can continue providing that same threat.

“When you have the ability for Will to pull it, it just changes the numbers,” Day said about Howard's ability to help the run game. “You think back to when we had Justin Fields and J.T. Barrett, it was just a different run game. I think you're starting to see that a little bit.”

Running through the middle was an easier task in Week 4, but the tailbacks have also found a lot of success bouncing to the outside, where many of their long runs have come. Senior wide receiver Emeka Egbuka thinks a big part of that is due to the willingness to block on the outside from the receivers, something that he said was a big focus during the offseason.

“It was a really big emphasis that we had going into this year because blocking downfield is where you really find the explosive plays,” he said. “If you watch in years past, all the explosive plays – the plays that could have been – are tackles that are made by safeties and cornerbacks. It's never going to be a D-lineman chasing them 30 yards downfield for the most part. So that really





SONNY BROCKWAY

IN COMMAND — Quarterback Will Howard (18) has the luxury of balanced offensive weapons with the likes of running backs TreVeyon Henderson and Quinshon Judkins and receivers Emeka Egbuka and Jeremiah Smith.

falls on the responsibility of the wide receivers to get those jobs done.

"I think it's more of a mentality thing," he added. "Blocking is never really a scheme. It can be partially technique on the outside, but for the most part, you have to want to block. You have to come off the ball every run play like it's a pass play to keep that threat of pass and run there at all times. It's definitely a mentality thing, something that we've been trying to hone in on."

That was obvious in the second quarter when sophomore pass-catcher Carnell Tate bounced inside from the slot on a Judkins run to block Marshall linebacker AG McGhee, opening a wide gap on the left side of the field for the running back to bounce to the left for a 29-yard run on which he was stopped just 4 yards short of what could have been another touchdown.

"What you're seeing is an identity that's slowly getting molded here where we're explosive on the perimeter," Day said. "I don't think it was perfect, but I see our receivers blocking on the perimeter. Once you can do that, and you can start running the ball the way that our running backs are running and the way the O-line is really growing – Donovan being back in there helped a lot, and the running backs ran hard."

Day said that having Judkins on his team has been great so far, and he appreciates the attitude that he brings to practice, where he wants to get better and play hard no matter the circumstances.

"I just appreciate how hard he plays, his pad level when he runs. He's got home-run ability, but you can see he gets behind his pads and runs physical. He's got a great at-

titude. I mean, he's got a great attitude. You can coach him hard, and he looks you in the eye. He almost appreciates the fact that when you coach him hard, you're trying to get him better. That's a great sign for somebody that hasn't been in the program for multiple years. It says a lot about who he is as a person," Day said.

"He's built different. He's a different beast," Howard said of Judkins. "He's physical. He's fast. You saw it on that breakaway

run. There's not much that that guy can't do. On top of that, he's one of my favorite people on the team. He's awesome. I love that dude.

"I would do anything for him, and then the plays that he's making are just a compound of all the work he's put in since he's been here. I'm excited for him, because he's only scratching the surface of what he's capable of, and he's already done some pretty damn good things."

Day also made sure to credit the play caller he hired over the offseason for helping the run game reach the heights, offensive coordinator Chip Kelly, who is well-known for his creative offensive mind which he has shown off with a lot of success at both the college and NFL levels.

Under Kelly's command, the offense has utilized pre-snap shifts and motion to both give the defense different looks and give the offense a better idea of how the defense is lining up against them.

Day said that not only is Kelly always thinking about what would be the best play to run in the current game, but also how that play will affect their offense in the future and if it will open up anything later in the game, or even the season.

Howard has enjoyed being part of Kelly's offense.

"You never know what you're going to get with Coach Kelly," Howard said. "He'll do just about anything, and I think that's the cool part about it. It keeps defenses on their toes. There's still a ton of stuff I'm sure we're going to come up with, new stuff we'll create and things we'll make off what we've already done. I think that's the fun part about it. It's a chess game. It's the game within the game."

While the offense started a bit slow against the Zips on Aug. 31, ever since that first half they have seemed to be able to score at will, many times doing so with explosive plays. And while that is a trait of many past Ohio State offenses, Kelly quickly elevated a unit that had a measly (by Buckeye standards) 30.5 points (44th in the nation) and 407.9 yards per game (47th) into one that has put up 52.3 points and 552.0 yards per game in three contests, marks that rank third (tied with Miami (Fla.) and fifth in the nation, respectively, after the

Week 4 slate of games.

Those extreme levels of production they have put together against two Mid-American Conference programs and Marshall might not continue, but it is possible for a team to do over a full year. Last year, LSU led the nation with 543.5 yards per game, followed by then-Pac-12 powerhouse Oregon with 531.4. The real test for the Buckeyes of Big Ten play is still coming for Kelly and his offense, but it's tough to see this high-powered offense being stopped.

To top off the great performances that Judkins and Henderson had in the game, true freshman James Peoples got onto the field in the fourth quarter and only continued to get what he wanted in the running game, just as his two veteran teammates did. On six rushes, he ran for 31 yards, a 5.2-yard average. In three games, he showed that the talent goes beyond just the first two on the depth chart, scoring a touchdown in each of the first two wins.

"I've got to give all three of them credit," Day said. "They all have special abilities, they play well off of each other, they're unselfish, which is the biggest thing you can say about the bunch of guys. They don't care who gets the credit. They're all running downhill and playing really fast. It's a good group, and I think (Locklyn) has got them playing hard."

But Judkins and Henderson led the way for the Buckeyes in this game and likely will for many more this season. As Egbuka said after the game, it's going to be very tough for opposing teams to game plan against this Ohio State offense.

"I feel amazing," he said. "We have a very balanced offense, I would say. When you're watching film on us and trying to scheme up your defense, it's going to be hard to stop our running game, hard to stop our passing attack."

"We have Quinshon Judkins and TreVeyon Henderson, probably the best duo that I've ever seen in college football. And we have the athletes that we do on the outside. So there are just threats everywhere. It's hard to game-plan for us."

SHOOT CLAY TARGETS AT BLACK WING SHOOTING CENTER

TRY SOMETHING NEW: TRAP » SKEET » SPORTING CLAYS



3722 MARYSVILLE RD., DELAWARE | WWW.BLACKWINGSC.COM | 740-363-7555

Fielding Benched After Kickoff Blunders

When Ohio State let go of special teams coach Parker Fleming in the offseason, it was likely in hopes of avoiding the type of performance his former unit had in its 49-14 win over Marshall.

The team's dreadful special teams outing started with Ohio State starting kicker Jayden Fielding, who developed some sort of the yips on kickoffs, launching three straight kicks out of bounds.

The first kick from Fielding was definitely inaccurate, going out of bounds at the 7-yard line, but the second two were even worse, showing something was clearly wrong with Fielding, either mentally or physically, going out of bounds at the 13-yard line and 18-yard line, respectively. After Fielding's third consecutive kick out of bounds, he was replaced by backup kicker Austin Snyder, who had no problems sending kicks into the Marshall end zone.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day, who now oversees the special teams unit with a slew of other Ohio State coaches, was predictably frustrated with the repeated errors by Fielding when asked about the issue after the game.

"We'll evaluate him and see if there's any tweak in there that happened in the hip, or whatever. But either way, we can't have that," Day said. "That's putting our defense in a terrible situation. Having three out of bounds on three drives that start on the 35-yard line, that's completely ridiculous. We've got to get that fixed, however we do that."

"You get to the point where you want to let somebody play through it, but at another point, we've got to make a change. I thought Austin did a nice job stepping in there and doing a good job kicking the ball off."

It wasn't just the kickoffs where the Buckeyes had some issues. Sophomore wide receiver Brandon Inniss, who has been the team's punt returner since a productive performance in the team's opening game against Akron and even served as the team's starting kick returner against Marshall, seemingly battled the sun for much of the first half returning punts. Inniss muffed a punt kicked to him in the second quarter, and Marshall recovered the fumble before the play ultimately came back after an illegal formation penalty committed by the Herd.

On a retry of sorts during the next play, Inniss used his hand to attempt to shield himself from the sun before coming down with the catch.

In a separate punt return from Inniss in the second half, the Buckeyes backed themselves up inside their own 20-yard line after an illegal block in the back penalty cost the team 10 yards.

In the end, Inniss returned one punt for 21 yards and had fair catches on four other punts in addition to a couple of boots going over his head into the end zone for touchbacks. But while it won't show up on the stat sheet, it will be hard for Inniss to forget the nearly-costly muffed punt.

Egbuka Returns To Form In Game Three

It had been 630 days since senior wide

GAME NOTEBOOK Bobby Gorbett

receiver Emeka Egbuka had a 100-yard game, and just over a year since he had scored a touchdown at Ohio Stadium, up until Egbuka put all of those droughts to bed with an explosive 117-yard, one touchdown performance against the Herd.

In a stellar sophomore campaign, Egbuka burst onto the scene in 2022 with 1,151 yards receiving and 10 touchdowns. Egbuka's 2022 season included six games with 100 or more yards receiving and at least one touchdown, including a 112-yard performance in the team's season-ending 42-41 loss to Georgia in the 2022 College Football Playoff Semifinal.

Although not quite as productive as he had been the previous year, Egbuka was still off to a solid 2023 season through his first four games, accumulating 263 yards and three touchdowns on 19 catches during that span. In the team's next game against Maryland, though, what was shaping up to be another superb season was flipped on its head when Egbuka suffered a severe ankle sprain that kept him on the sidelines for the next three games.

When Egbuka returned from injury in the team's final five games, he wasn't quite the player he had been at the beginning of the season. He failed to reach the 100-yard mark in each game and, more often than not, failed to get even halfway there, going for under 50 yards in three different games.

The senior receiver may have been a bit overshadowed in Ohio State's first two games by the coming-out party of true freshman receiver Jeremiah Smith, but he still showed he was much closer to the 2022 form than how he played coming off the injury in 2023, with nine catches for 149 yards in the first two games.

But in the first half against Marshall, Egbuka looked as good as he ever has. Egbuka's vintage performance started with a screen pass from quarterback Will Howard. On the offense's second play from scrimmage, Egbuka caught the screen pass and found a convoy of Ohio State offensive linemen in front of him. As Egbuka put it, even a toddler could've gotten into the end zone on the play.

"I'm just very thankful for the people blocking for me," Egbuka said of the 68-yard play. "It was a screen play, obviously, and the linemen were able to get out, get to the next level and block those linebackers and safeties. Gee Scott Jr. was on the back side getting the safety for me. And Carnell Tate ran all the way down and scored with me, pretty much, to get that last corner. So it was by no feat of my own that I was able to score."

The satisfaction of Egbuka's touchdown was at least briefly stopped in its tracks when he turned around to see a penalty flag sitting on the other side of the field, but luckily for the wide receiver, his disappointment was short-lived because



SONNY BROCKWAY

SOMETHING AFOOT — Junior kicker Jayden Fielding inexplicably booted three consecutive kickoffs out of bounds vs. Marshall, prompting coach Ryan Day to replace him with Austin Snyder for the duration of the game.

the referees decided to pick up the flag.

"I don't know if you guys can see it on the playback, but I just started laughing," Egbuka said, "I was just like, 'It would be a flag.' But it was all good. The fact that they pulled it back, obviously there's a little relief in my spirit. But I had no doubt that if it even was a flag, we were going to go down and score, probably on the next play. So that's just the mentality we have."

One would think that Egbuka's first touchdown at Ohio Stadium in over a calendar year would trigger an emotional response from the receiver, especially considering the injury that slowed down the momentum of his junior year. Instead, Egbuka was more focused on his team's accomplishments following the game.

"It's whatever. It's another day in the office," he said. "I'm just going to do my job to the best of my ability. If the ball comes my way, it does. But at the end of the day, there's a responsibility deeper than just statistics. We're trying to make a legendary run this year. And you can't have that selfish mentality."

Egbuka added another explosive play not long after his 68-yard touchdown on a 28-yard reception from Howard to officially eclipse the century mark for the first

time since 2022.

He wrapped up a four-catch, 111-yard first-half performance with a clutch 7-yard reception on third-and-4 that kept the Ohio State drive alive and allowed senior running back TreVeyon Henderson to score on a 14-yard touchdown run one play later.

It was a quieter second half for Egbuka, who had one catch for 6 yards, but that had more to do with an unstoppable ground game led by running backs Henderson and Quinshon Judkins carrying the load for the Ohio State offense in the second half.

Egbuka will likely be the last to shout it from the rooftops, but the eye-popping numbers from his first-half outburst suggest he has returned as one of the country's best pass-catchers. To Egbuka, though, whether it be 300 yards or zero yards, what's important is his effort.

"I mean, obviously it's fun to be able to perform at a very high level, but I never really try to hang my hat on the statistics," Egbuka said. "If I had zero catches on a day, but I still ran all the right routes and did all the right things, it doesn't make me any less of a player. I could have gone for 300 yards today, but that would've just

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

When Chip Kelly was hired by Ohio State to be its offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach this offseason, the expectation was that the play-calling guru would elevate a Buckeye run game that did not always reach its explosive potential in 2024.

Ohio State's rushing attack did have a dominant performance against Western Michigan in Week 2, but the Buckeyes seemed to take another step in reaching that expected full potential against Marshall. Ohio State, led by the dynamic running back tandem of TreVeyon Henderson and Quinshon Judkins, totaled an impressive 280 rushing yards on 31 attempts in its 49-14 blowout win over the Thundering Herd. That's a gaudy 9.0-yard average, a total that Kelly would be happy with on any day.

The Buckeyes were able to run the ball with ease in large part because of the premier talents of Judkins (14 rushes for 173 yards and two touchdowns) and Henderson (six rushes for 76 yards and two scores), but it was all made possible due to the creative play-calling of Kelly, who designed numerous different schemes that often had his two backs going for huge gains.

Kelly's genius was on best display in the red zone late in the first half, when he designed a reverse counter run for TreVeyon Henderson that had Austin Siereveld, Bennett Christian and Jelani Thurman all pulling for blocks in front of him to give the senior a 14-yard score and Ohio State the 28-7 lead. He also paid homage to former Ohio State head coach Woody Hayes earlier in the half by having his offense line up in a "T" formation that had Judkins, Patrick Gurd and Henderson line up behind Will Howard, who "tush pushed" forward for the 1-yard score.

What Didn't Work

Special teams are the obvious choice here. The unit was heavily criticized last season for its sloppy play and overall ineffectiveness, two faults that ultimately led to the firing of coordinator Parker Fleming this offseason.

But as bad as the unit was last year, its performance against the Herd may have been worse than it was in any game of 2023, which is certainly saying something. Ohio State's special teams woes began with Jayden Fielding inexplicably booting three straight kickoffs out of bounds for penalties, a bizarre series of events that gave Marshall great field position to start each of those drives. The last of those resulted in the Herd's second and final touchdown of the game that at the time cut the deficit to 28-14 at halftime.

Fielding's mishaps, whether they were due to him having the "yips" or some other external factors, prompted Day to make a quick change and put senior Austin Snyder in charge of kicking duties for the entire second half, and he filled in well with zero kicks out of bounds and two touchbacks. His first touchback even drew a "Bronx cheer" from what was a frustrated Ohio State crowd.

But the special teams mistakes went way beyond Fielding. Sophomore wideout Brandon

Inniss, who was called on by Day to assume both punt- and kick-return duties, made what could have been a costly blunder early in the second quarter when he muffed a punt inside the Buckeyes' 20-yard line, which would have given the Herd the ball back in the red zone. Luckily for Inniss, the play was called back for an illegal motion penalty on Marshall.

But that wasn't all. Ohio State was later called for an illegal block in the back penalty on a Herd punt in the third quarter that pushed the Buckeyes' back 10 yards from the 27 to the 17.

Ohio State can get away with these mistakes against a team like Marshall, but if these same problems arise against more formidable teams such as Oregon, Penn State or Michigan later in the season, it could make the difference between a close win and an excruciating defeat.

Play Of The Game

Ohio State had many eye-popping plays on offense against Marshall that are worth noting – it had four scores that went 40 or more yards – but none was as noteworthy as Judkins' 86-yard touchdown early in the second quarter.

The Buckeyes were somewhat sleepwalking through the early portion of this game, holding just a 14-7 lead through one quarter against a largely inferior opponent, but the Ole Miss transfer seemed to provide a major jolt of energy to the home team's sideline on the very first play of Ohio State's fourth drive of the game.

Facing a first-and-10 from the Ohio State 14-yard line following a solid boot from Marshall punter Alec Clark, Judkins took a handoff from Howard from the shotgun and instantly burst through the middle of the Buckeyes' offensive line. With nearly 80 yards of open green grass in front of him, he sprinted past every single Herd defender and took it to the house, just barely diving into the end zone after being tripped up by Marshall defensive back J.J. Roberts as he crossed the 10-yard line.

Judkins' long rush helped electrify an Ohio Stadium crowd of 103,871 and gave the Buckeyes a more comfortable 21-7 lead, and it also made some program history. The 86-yard score was tied for the third-longest rushing touchdown in Ohio State history with J.T. Barrett's rushing score against Minnesota in 2014, trailing only Morris Bradshaw's 88-yard score in 1971 and Eddie George's 87-yard scamper in 1995. It also marked a career high for the junior Judkins. Ohio State's offensive line also deserves credit for its efforts during the historic score, most notably Donovan Jackson, Seth McLaughlin and Siereveld, who each effectively sealed his respective defender near the line of scrimmage to help their running back get loose.

— Patrick Engels

been because the ball came my way. So I try to do what I can with the opportunities that I am presented with.

DE Curry Ejected For Targeting

Sophomore defensive end Caden Curry made it two players disqualified for targeting in as many games for Ohio State when he was flagged on a play where he hit Marshall starting quarterback Stone Earle at the end of the first half. With the Buckeyes losing senior cornerback Denzel Burke to the same foul in the previous win over Western Michigan, Curry's disqualification had to be especially frustrating for the defensive coaching staff.

Curry appeared to lower his helmet in tackling Earle, likely hitting the Thundering Herd quarterback with the crown of his helmet, which is a key aspect of the targeting rule. Although Curry wasn't flagged for targeting immediately after the play – instead he was flagged with roughing the passer – a replay review determined he had committed targeting.

Day provided little comment when asked about the targeting call after the game.

"I've got to look a little bit closer at it," he said. "When you see things in slow motion, sometimes it looks a little different than when it's live."

The disqualification from the game cut short what had been a solid perfor-

mance from Curry at the end of the first half. Earning his first career start in place of injured senior defensive tackle Tyleik Williams, Curry recorded his first sack of the season and the team's only sack of the game, taking down Earle 11 yards behind the line of scrimmage on third-and-9 play early in the second quarter to drive the Thundering Herd out of field-goal range.

There is no good time to commit a targeting penalty, but the timing of Curry's penalty was almost perfect. With 12 seconds to go in the first half, Curry committed the penalty just early enough so that he would not have to miss the first half of Ohio State's next game against Michigan State.

Defense Shrugs Off Sluggish Start

It didn't start off pretty, but the Buckeye defense ended up with a solid performance. In the first drive of the game, the Thundering Herd converted three third-down conversions on their way to a 13-play 75-yard touchdown drive. Earle executed Marshall's air-raid passing scheme to perfection, completing 5 of 6 passes on the drive for 43 yards.

It was a disappointing result for an Ohio State defense that hadn't allowed a touchdown all season, but not necessarily atypical of how the unit has started other games this season. In the 52-6 win over Akron in week one, the Zips mainly found

what little offensive production they had in the game in the first couple of drives, which helped them take a 3-0 lead.

It wasn't just a lucky drive for the Thundering Herd in the first half, though. Good throws by Earle and some crafty offensive scheming, which saw the team have scattered success running the ball with quarterback draws, gave the Buckeyes some fits. A clutch throw from Earle to wide receiver Elijah Metcalf got the team on the board again for a touchdown with just six seconds to go in the first half.

Marshall's 14 points and 203 yards at halftime were more than Ohio State's defense had allowed in the entire Akron or Western Michigan games. Day felt as though the Marshall scheme that utilized its quarterback in the run game was difficult to deal with, but there was still plenty that the Buckeyes could have done better.

"I felt like Marshall did a nice job with their style of play, which is plus one, spreading out with the quarterback run," Day said. "There are pluses and minuses to that. The plus, you can be plus one. The minus, you take a lot of shots on your quarterback. They did a good job with that. I thought we continued to stick with it. There are still a lot of things that we're going to watch on this film that we're not going to be pleased with, just with overall execution. I know (defensive coordinator Jim Knowles) is going to be that way."

Facing its first real adversity as a unit

all season, the Buckeye defense kept a level head and quickly got Marshall out of its rhythm in the second half.

In the first series in the second half, Marshall went three-and-out after one of the quarterback runs, which had been fairly effective on third downs in the first half, was ended with a couple of Buckeyes surrounding Earle before he fell down at the line of scrimmage 3 yards short of the line to gain.

After Earle went down with injury, Marshall had real difficulties moving the ball on its next drive with new quarterback Braylon Braxton and punted after one first-down conversion. The Thundering Herd punted on every single possession the rest of the game except for their final one, where they took three straight kneels. In the end, Marshall's hot start to the game ended with a total yardage of 264.

Ohio State senior cornerback Jordan Hancock was pleased with how the team bounced back in the second half.

"We haven't been hit with too much adversity in the season, but them going out there and scoring, we just had to take a chip on our shoulder on that second drive and those drives after that," Hancock said. "That's kind of what we did. We just had to go out there and make adjustments, because we got some really good coaches, and they're trying to put us in the best positions for us to win."

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 49, Marshall 14

Ohio State fifth-year quarterback Will Howard on how he feels the offense has grown over the first three games of the season under offensive coordinator Chip Kelly's play-calling: "I think we're clicking. We're on the same page on a lot of things, just the way that we see coverages and the way that we see the pictures. We're on the same page on a lot of stuff. I think we're really starting to click."

Ohio State senior wide receiver Emeka Egbuka on the challenges Ohio State's offense presents to opposing defenses when they are firing on all cylinders: "It's just hard to guard. You can't really be a jack-of-all-trades on defense. If you have too many people in the box, we're going to be able to beat you deep. And if you lighten that load, we have Quinshon Judkins and TreVeyon Henderson running at you. It's definitely hard to game-plan for. We have tremendous confidence in the people that we put on the field week by week. So we're just going to continue doing what we've been doing."

Egbuka on how much he enjoys watching Ohio State's runningback duo of Henderson and Judkins go to work on offense: "I mean, it's amazing. We were hitting from deep so much and so often. With the athletes that we have in the backfield, they can spring any run, even if it's just an inside zone or a halfback dive, you never really know what's going to be up. It helps the receivers make sure we're on our P's and Q's blocking downfield because you never know when one of those is going to spring."

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on his team's explosive plays on offense: "You see the athleticism of some of our offensive linemen. Josh Fryar out in space. Seth McLaughlin did a great job on (Egbuka's touchdown), and then Emeka's got the home-run ability. So that spreads you out (sideline to sideline). We took a shot early, and we've got to clean that up a little bit. There's some things that we can do better there, and coach better. But we're trying to stretch the field vertically."

Ohio State junior running back Judkins on his career-long 86-yard rushing touchdown: "It definitely felt pretty good. I turned around a little bit to see if there was a flag on the play. But I'm definitely super excited."

Judkins on his time at Ohio State so far this season: "It's definitely been a super fun experience. I enjoy every single win with my teammates. Like Coach Day said, it's hard to get a win in any football game. So we're going to enjoy the win, and we'll come back tomorrow and see how we can improve for the next game."

Judkins on if the heat during the game matched that of a game at Ole Miss: "Some days it was a little hotter. I think some of my teammates had to get a little bit adjusted. Someone was breath-

ing super hard, and I was like, 'It's not even that hot.' So it wasn't as hot as I thought it was going to be."

Ohio State senior cornerback Jordan Hancock on the initial challenges they faced defending Marshall: "(Marshall quarterback Stone Earle), he's got some good legs. He can run. So we had to turn to the scramble drill, and we adjusted better in the second half."

Hancock on the challenges of maintaining focus and not getting frustrated after giving up a touchdown on the first drive of the game: "It's really hard because they come in there and they score. It's really difficult, but we had to bounce back. That's going to happen over the season, and we just have to keep a level head and play the next play. Next play mindset, and that's kind of the mindset we still have to install."

Ohio State fifth-year safety Lathan Ransom on how he felt seeing some of the younger defensive linemen step up in senior defensive lineman Tyleik Williams' absence: "It was great. I think the young guys stepped up really well. That's what's so special about our team. They always say, 'Have a pair and a spare.' We always have two dudes that are always ready to play and a backup that's just as ready. I think those dudes stepped up and played really well."

Day on his team's defensive line depth: "I'll have to watch it. I feel like it was a mixed bag coming out of the game. There was some good play in there, but there were some other things I think we're going to look at and want to get fixed. I'll wait until the film and get some more feedback from the defensive coaches on exactly how some of those should have been fit."

Day on the injury status of Williams: "Tyleik will be day-to-day. I don't know when we'll have an update there, but he's day-to-day."

Day on his second-quarter unsportsmanlike conduct penalty: "My situation was, there was 21 seconds on the clock when we subbed in. They, in my opinion, were really, really, really, really slow getting in. At some point, when you make a sub around 21 seconds, you still should be able to run a play. We had to call a timeout. I went out to the numbers. I didn't curse, but I was raising my voice, saying that there was 21 seconds on the clock, and at some point that has to be a delay of game on the defense. I guess I yelled too loud. I'm not sure why, but that's what happened."

Marshall head coach Charles Huff on if Ohio State lived up to the billing in person after previously calling the Buckeyes the "best team I've seen on film ever": "Offensively, absolutely. And then defensively, they smother you. They kind of just lean on you and weigh you down a little bit. They laid on us long enough to wear us down offensively.



SONNY BROCKWAY

LISTEN HERE — Ohio State head coach Ryan Day was flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct in the second quarter after the Buckeyes were forced to take a timeout because of Marshall's substitution methods.

Offensively, I don't know, (they're comparable to) 2019 LSU, 2020 Alabama. They're probably in that realm. They're really good. Really good."

Hancock on if he is relieved to be done with nonconference play and excited for Big Ten play, starting with a trip to East Lansing to take on Michigan State on Sept. 28: "I've been ready for Big Ten Conference play. The cold weather outside, going to hostile territories, and the tradition. Big Ten, Ohio State or Michigan State, I've always been watching those games, and I'm just excited for the matchup."

Buckeyes Run Over Marshall In 49-14 Victory

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The tandem of Quinshon Judkins and TreVeyon Henderson aren't running for office in this election year, just the end zone, but Ohio State fans would have no problem casting ballots for them after their stellar performance on a sweltering Saturday afternoon at Ohio Stadium on Sept. 21.

Judkins and Henderson ran for two touchdowns apiece and combined for 249 yards as part of a big-play offense when No. 3 Ohio State defeated pesky Marshall 49-14 in front of 103,871 fans.

The Buckeyes (3-0) had four scores of 40-plus yards in their final tune-up before opening Big Ten play at Michigan State on Sept. 28.

Marshall (1-2) scored the first and last touchdowns of the first half, but the Buckeyes scored 28 points in between for a 28-14 halftime score before going on a 21-0 run in the second half.

Herd That

Marshall took the opening kickoff and rammed the ball down the throats of the Buckeyes, who were without injured defensive tackle Tyleik Williams. The Thundering Herd marched 75 yards in 13 plays and took 6:46 off the clock for a 7-0 lead at 8:14, a drive that was finished off by a 1-yard run from Ethan Payne.

Stone Earle had a 16-yard pass to Bralon Brown to the OSU 41 for the second third-down conversion early in the drive. That was followed by a 12-yard reception by Christian Fitzpatrick to the 29 and Jordan Houston's rush for 14.

On second-and-9 from the 14, Earle ran left for 10 yards before fumbling the ball out of bounds. A lengthy review confirmed that Marshall maintained possession, and Earle then gained 3 yards before the score.

It took just 42 seconds for the Buckeyes to respond. Starting from the 30-yard line, Henderson got 2 yards on the ground to start the drive. Will Howard then tossed the ball in the backfield to Emeka Egbuka, and he raced up the middle for a 68-yard TD at 7:32.

Marshall's next possession resulted in a punt, but Howard on the fourth snap of the Buckeyes' next drive threw his first interception of the season when his deep pass to Jeremiah Smith was intercepted by Josh Moten at the Marshall 9-yard line.

The Herd mixed passing and running to set up a fourth-and-1 at their own 48 on the first play of the second quarter. Earle kept the ball but slipped to the turf for a 3-yard loss, turning the ball over to the Buckeyes before Howard's 1-yard run at 12:31 put OSU ahead 14-7.

The six-play, 2:26 series began with Judkins making an 11-yard catch. He followed that by running for 1 yard and then 29 more to get to the 4-yard line. He lost 2 yards on the next play, but Henderson got 5 of his own prior to Howard's pushing in from a yard out.

OSU got a huge break on Marshall's next possession when punt returner Brandon Inniss fumbled the ball away at the 16 but it was nullified by a Herd illegal formation,



SONNY BROCKWAY

E-LECTRIC — Emeka Egbuka's 68-yard touchdown off a screen pass was one of four scoring plays of 40-plus yards against Marshall. His five receptions went for 117 yards.

forcing them to kick it again.

After Inniss made a fair catch on the next punt at the 14, Judkins tore through the line for an 86-yard touchdown in 12 seconds to make it 21-7 at 10:50. He tied J.T. Barrett (Minnesota, Nov. 15, 2014) for the third-longest touchdown run in school history.

The Buckeyes got the ball again via a punt after Caden Curry had a third-down sack for 11 yards, and they went 80 yards for a 28-7 advantage at 3:33 on a 14-yard run by Henderson. They used seven plays over a 3:30 span.

Egbuka opened the drive with catches of 8 and 28 yards. On the next play, Henderson was stopped at the line but bolted outside to the left for 17 yards to get to the Marshall 27. Howard then had to scramble and was able to turn it into an 8-yard gain, but Henderson lost 2 to bring the Buckeyes back to the 21. Egbuka added another grab, this one for 7 yards to the 14 to set up Henderson's score.

Marshall responded with a lengthy drive capped by a tightrope catch by Elijah Metcalf at the back of the end zone for a 13-yard touchdown with six seconds left in the first half for a 28-14 score.

Earle found Brown for 10 early in the possession to the OSU 45, and later on a fourth-and-4 from the 37 with 37 seconds

left, Metcalf had a 10-yard catch and Curry was flagged for roughing the passer, getting ejected for targeting on the play and setting the Herd up for the score.

The ball was placed at the 13, and Earle had plenty of protection on the next play to hit the crossing Metcalf, who barely kept his left foot inbounds. The 65-yard drive used nine plays and 3:27. After the kickoff, Howard took a knee to finish the half.

Ohio State had 307 yards (149 passing, 158 rushing) to Marshall's 203 (132 passing, 71 rushing) in the half. Howard was 8 of 9 for 149 yards with Egbuka making four catches for 111 yards, and Judkins tallied 114 yards on four carries. Earle was 17 of 21 for 132 yards.

Runaway

Ohio State received the kickoff and promptly used a 40-yard touchdown run by Henderson to make it 35-14 at 11:48.

Howard threw to Judkins for 3 yards to the 28 on the first play. Judkins gained 11, and Egbuka's catch for 6 moved the ball to the 45. Judkins gained 1 yard, and pass interference on a throw to Carnell Tate resulted in a first down at the Marshall 47. Tight end Will Kacmarek had a 7-yard reception, and Henderson came up big on the ensuing play.

The Buckeyes' next drive was stalled by curious officiating. On second-and-10 from the Marshall 29, the Buckeyes were lined up for the snap, but the Herd were allowed numerous substitutions and OSU was forced to call timeout to avoid a delay of game. Coach Ryan Day was furious with the no-call and was assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. Needing 25 yards, Judkins rushed for 5, but Howard lost 11 on a sack. Marshall was called for a delay of game before the Buckeyes punted.

Smith increased the score to 42-14 with 3:31 remaining in the third on his 53-yard grab-and-go from Howard after Inniss had a 21-yard punt return. Smith caught the ball at the Marshall 46 and left everyone behind on the first play of the drive.

A Marshall punt led to the next OSU score, a 6-yard run by Judkins with 13:46 left in the game to up the count to 49-14.

Tate made a catch for 13 to the OSU 30, and Howard went back to him for another 30 to the Marshall 40. After an incompleting, Judkins ran for 4 while 15 yards were tacked on for a Marshall personal foul. On the second play of the fourth quarter, the Buckeyes faced fourth-and-1 from the 12-yard line. Judkins picked up 6. He then ran left, pushed a defender out of the way and scored to conclude the nine-play, 83-yard, 3:15 sequence.

Marshall gained 61 yards in the second half, only seven coming through the air.

"It's doing our job," safety Lathan Ransom said. "Everyone's got to do their job. If we all do our job and execute, I think we have the best defense in the country."

Devin Brown replaced Howard with 11:24 left and directed two drives, each ending with a punt. Brown was 2 of 6 for 14 yards and added 3 rushing yards on one carry.

The game ended with Marshall taking three knees for minus-5 yards starting at its 22.

Henderson finished with 76 yards on six carries (12.7 average). Judkins had 173 yards on 14 attempts (12.4).

Howard was 16 of 20 for 275 yards, throwing an interception and two touchdowns. Egbuka had five catches for 117 yards.

Notes

Judkins' run was only exceeded by an 88-yarder by Morris Bradshaw in 1971 and an 87-yard run by Eddie George in 1995. ... Judkins, a first-season transfer from Ole Miss, earned his 15th career 100-yard rushing game and his second of the season. ... Tate had four catches for 66 yards and Smith three for 70. ... OSU had 569 total yards (289 passing, 280 rushing). Marshall had 264 yards (139 passing, 125 rushing). ... Ransom had a game-high eight tackles (six solo).



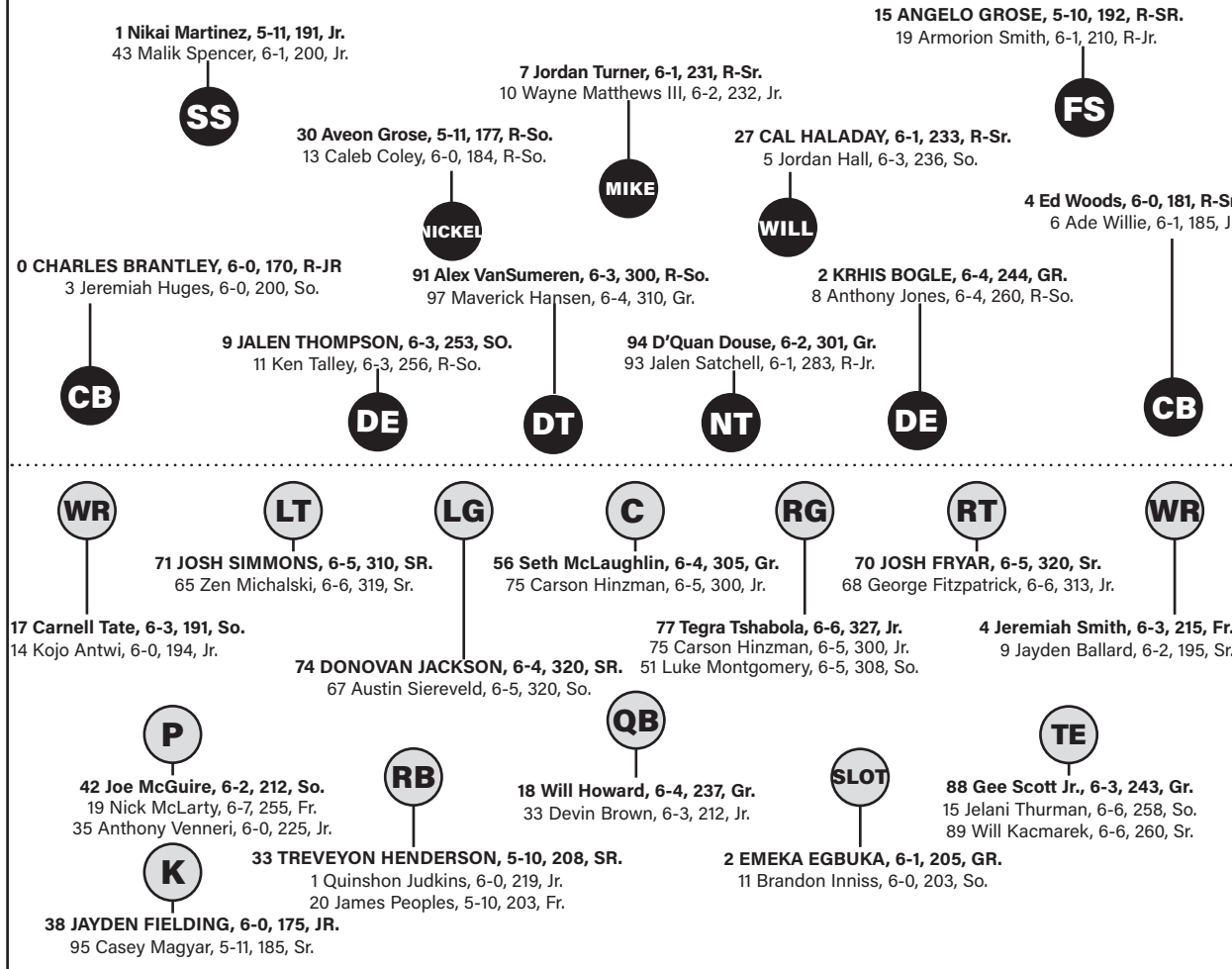
Ohio State at Michigan State



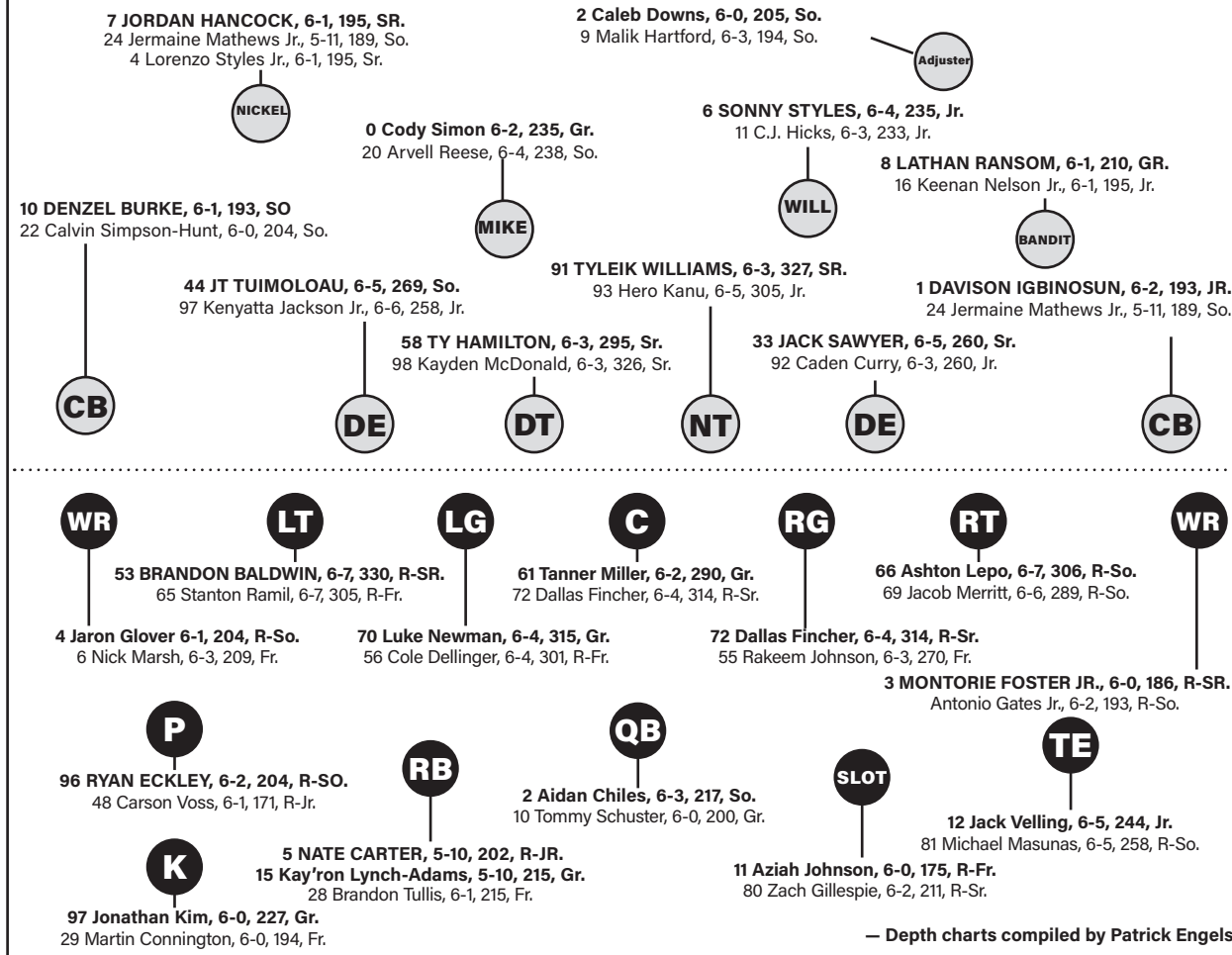
Saturday, Sept. 28 • 7 p.m. • Peacock
Spartan Stadium; East Lansing, Mich.

Projected Depth Charts

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



WHEN MICHIGAN STATE HAS THE BALL...



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. MICHIGAN STATE RUSH DEFENSE

Marshall had an extra week to prepare for Ohio State but it didn't matter. The Spartans don't have the luxury so they must somehow deal with Quinshon Judkins (336 yards, 9.3 yards per carry) and Trevayon Henderson (207, 8.6), who each had two touchdowns against the Herd. Henderson ran for a 40-yard TD. Nice, but Judkins went 86 yards as part of four 40-plus yard scores against Marshall. The best part is that both are fresh and healthy heading into Big Ten play. Michigan State won its first three games for new coach Jonathan Smith against Florida Atlantic (16-10), Maryland (27-24) and Prairie View A&M (40-0) with an improving defense. They held Prairie View A&M to 17 yards on the ground, their fewest given up since Tulsa had minus-73 in 2019. On Sept. 21, Boston College prevailed 23-19 with the Eagles rushing for 152 yards on 43 attempts (3.5 per rush). They had touchdown runs of 11 and 36 yards. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

MICHIGAN STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

MSU has a veteran back in sixth-year graduate Kay'ron Lynch-Adams, who led the Spartans in rushing after four games, averaging 67.8 yards per and one TD. He ran for 61 yards on 15 carries (4.1) with a long of 19 vs. Boston College and quarterback Aidan Chiles chipped in with 57 yards on nine totes (6.3). Nate Carter has provided a punch as well. He had a career-long 60-yard TD vs. Prairie View A&M but gained only 9 yards on nine carries vs. the Eagles. The Buckeyes limited Marshall to 125 rushing yards on a 2.9 average. And that was without stellar injured defensive tackle Tyleik Williams. His status is unknown for the game. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. MICHIGAN STATE PASS DEFENSE

Will Howard had impressive numbers (16 of 20 for 275 yards, two TDs with first interception of the season) but for the most part he kept it simple: Get the ball to his extraordinarily talented receivers. Take Emeka Egbuka. A short toss turns into a 68-yard TD. Take star freshman Jeremiah Smith. Another little toss to him and away Smith goes for a 53-yard TD. And you can add Carnell Tate's comparatively quiet game with four catches for a "mere" 64 yards. Michigan State has recorded a Big Ten-leading 15.0 sacks and 32.0 tackles for losses along with four interceptions through four games. They had no picks but four sacks and five TFLs vs. Boston College, which had 140 passing yards. Charles Brantley set a school record for the longest defensive play with a 100-yard interception return for a touchdown in the second quarter vs. Prairie View A&M. He has the Spartans' two most recent pick-sixes. The other was for 32 yards against the Buckeyes on Oct. 8, 2022. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

MICHIGAN STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Sophomore quarterback Aidan Chiles has ability - he threw for 363 yards vs. Maryland, the eighth-highest total in MSU history. True freshman wide receiver Nick Marsh had 11 catches for 232 yards in his first three games but he was one of four receivers and two offensive linemen injured for the Boston College game to hamper Chiles. He was 17 of 35 for 241 yards and three interceptions. His favorite target was Montorie Foster Jr. (four catches for 87 yards). The Buckeyes gave up only 7 passing yards in the second half to Marshall's Air Raid offense but a large part of that was due to Stone Earle (16 of 21 for 132 yards and a TD) leaving the game midway through the third quarter. He was effective on the game's opening drive when he took the Thundering Herd 75 yards in 13 plays for a touchdown. MSU runs a similar offense as Marshall so the Buckeyes have been warned. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

MSU's Ryan Eckley is a Ray Guy Award candidate as the nation's top punter. He made two punts for a 49.0 average against Boston College after averaging 50.6 yards in the first three games. He averaged 46.8 yards last season. The Buckeyes' kickoffs were awful - three straight were out of bounds - and Brandon Inniss muffed a punt return. Fortunately, it was overturned by a Marshall penalty. **EDGE: MICHIGAN STATE**

INTANGIBLES

First Big Ten game, first road game for the Buckeyes. The Spartans have a chance to make a statement in prime time but they don't have a roster to match OSU's. **EDGE: OHIO STATE.**

STAFF PREDICTION

If the Buckeyes get off to another slow start and let the Spartans hang around the game will be interesting going into the half. Ohio State will be tested but they will pull away for what will look like an easy win. **OHIO STATE 42, MICHIGAN STATE 14**

- Depth charts compiled by Patrick Engels

MSU Seeking Culture Shift With Smith At Helm

By **PATRICK ENGELS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Around this time last year, Michigan State's football program was entering a state of turmoil that few teams have encountered in recent years.

Just one day after the Spartans improved to 2-0 on the young season following a blowout 45-14 win over Richmond on Sept. 9, 2023, a USA Today article dropped a bombshell on the program and university, identifying head coach Mel Tucker as the subject of a university sexual harassment investigation that alleged Michigan State's football leader sexually harassed rape survivor Brenda Tracy during an April 2022 phone call.

Tucker, who had led Michigan State to an 11-2 record and signed a hefty 10-year, \$95 million contract in 2021, was promptly suspended by the university one day later and was fired for cause not long after on Sept. 27, 2023.

This hectic series of events, which also included the team naming Harlon Barnett as interim head coach and rehiring College Football Hall of Famer Mark Dantonio to serve as associate head coach, cast a negative light on the team throughout the 2023 campaign, and it was made even more prominent by the team's poor performance on the field.

Under Barnett's leadership, Michigan State won just two of its final 10 games to put its final record at 4-8 – the program's worst mark since 2016 – while also finishing the year near the bottom of the Big Ten in both scoring offense (15.9, 13th) and scoring defense (28.3, 11th).

Michigan State's 2023 season may have been what some might call a "dumpster fire," but nearly a year after Tucker's firing, there is a much more positive feeling in East Lansing.

Now under the leadership of former Oregon State head coach Jonathan Smith, who was hired to lead the team just one day after Michigan State's season-ending 42-0 blowout loss against Penn State last November, the Spartans have turned the page in 2024, starting the season 3-0 for the first time since 2021 before falling to Boston College in a close game, 23-19, on the road.

Regardless of the loss, it's still a fast start for Michigan State that has created some optimism around the program, one which Smith thinks has given his new-look team a major confidence boost as they enter the brunt of Big Ten play, starting with a primetime home contest against No. 3 Ohio State on Sept. 28 (7 p.m., Peacock).

"I do think there is confidence that comes with having success," Smith said on Sept. 16. "We've learned that we have an opportunity to play at a high level. We're going to need to do it more consistently, but I'm not going to lie, winning games helps (elevate) the energy in the building."

Michigan State's early success this season has come with a nearly entirely new roster. Smith brought in 33 freshmen and 28 transfers during the offseason – a mark that ranks 18th in the FBS and second in the Big Ten behind Indiana (30) – while he also took six of his assistants from Oregon State with him to his new school.

That roster overhaul begins at the most important position, where Smith plucked sopho-

more Aidan Chiles from the Beavers to serve as his new team's starting quarterback.

Chiles was the backup to now-Florida State quarterback DJ Uiagalelei at Oregon State last season, completing 24 of his 35 passes for 309 yards and four touchdowns while rushing for another 79 and three scores in nine games. But this season the former Beaver has helped invigorate a Michigan State passing offense that ranked 96th in the nation last season at 199.8 yards per game, completing 63 of his 116 pass attempts for 891 yards and four touchdowns.

Chiles had a rough start to his Michigan State career, completing just 10 of his 24 passes for 114 yards and zero touchdowns to two interceptions in Michigan State's 16-10 win over Florida Atlantic on Aug. 30, but both the sophomore and his coach have said he has grown more comfortable as the weeks have gone by.

That comfort was perhaps on the best display in the Spartans' come-from-behind 27-24 Week 2 win at Maryland on Sept. 7, where he showed off his big-play ability by completing 24 of his 38 attempts for 363 yards and three touchdowns, two of those scores going for over 30 yards. His passing-yard total was the seventh most by a Spartan quarterback in program history and the most since Brian Lewerke's 400-yard outing in Michigan State's win over Penn State in November 2017.

"Last week, I basically lied to myself," Chiles said after the Maryland win. "I told myself I wasn't scared. I was. It is what it is. It was my first start. And then today, I came out with the mentality of, 'Take a deep breath and go hunt.'"

Chiles – who has also tallied 95 rushing yards and three scores on the ground this season – took another step forward throwing the football in Michigan State's 40-0 win against Prairie View A&M on Sept. 14, throwing for 173 yards and a touchdown.

But that positive momentum was halted in a big way in the loss to the Eagles, where he completed 17 of his 35 passes for 241 yards and zero touchdowns to three interceptions.

Chiles' turnover issues have been prevalent throughout the season, with the sophomore totaling seven interceptions in his first four games. It's a problem that Smith knows his quarterback needs to fix entering Big Ten play, but also one he is confident his young quarterback can eliminate as the season progresses.

"Those things change the game," Smith said of Chiles' errant throws. "But those guys continued to battle throughout."

"(Chiles) is out there battling ... If he keeps his approach, he'll continue to improve. I do think he's got some dynamic play in him."

As Smith alluded to, even with the turnovers Chiles has still helped elevate the play-making ability of this Michigan State offense through the early portion of the season. But he has had some help in doing that due to the efforts of another newcomer to the program, true freshman wide receiver Nick Marsh.

Marsh, a former four-star prospect and 30th-best wideout in the nation out of River Rouge, Mich., has lived up to the hype early on in his college career, hauling in 11 catches for a team-high 232 yards and a touchdown through four games.

Like Chiles, the freshman Marsh had his coming-out party on the road against the Terps. He brought in eight receptions for an

Get To Know ... Michigan State

- **2024 Record:** 3-1.
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Multiple; Defensive Formation – Multiple 4-2-5; Starters Returning – Offense 3, Defense 5, Specialists 1.
- **Head Coach:** Jonathan Smith, 1st Year at Michigan State, 3-1
- **Series History:** 53rd meeting; Ohio State leads 37-15-0
- **School Facts:** Location – East Lansing, Mich.; Enrollment – 48,618; Nickname – Spartans; Colors – Green, White; Conference – Big Ten; Stadium – Spartan Stadium (Surface – Natural Grass; Capacity – 74,866).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Kay'ron Lynch Adams	49	271	5.5	1
Nate Carter	47	207	4.4	1
Aidan Chiles	27	95	3.5	3

Passing	Comp-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Aidan Chiles	63-116	54.3	891	4-7
Tommy Schuster	8-10	80	97	0-0

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Nick Marsh	11	232	21.1	1
Montorie Foster Jr.	17	200	11.8	1
Jack Velling	12	159	13.3	0

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 25.5
Rushing Yards Per Game – 153.8
Passing Yards Per Game – 247.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 400.8

2024 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Aug. 30	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	W, 16-10
Sept. 7	at Maryland	W, 27-24
Sept. 14	PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	W, 40-0
Sept. 21	at Boston College	L, 23-19
Sept. 28	OHIO STATE	7 p.m.
Oct. 4	at Oregon	9 p.m.
Oct. 19	IOWA	TBA
Oct. 26	at Michigan	TBA
Nov. 2	INDIANA	TBA
Nov. 16	at Illinois	TBA
Nov. 22	PURDUE	TBA
Nov. 30	RUTGERS	TBA
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yards	Sacks
Jordan Turner	14	8	22.0	6.0-37 3.0-30
Khristian Bogle	11	8	19.0	5.0-29 3.0-19
Angelo Grose	12	7	19.0	0.5-0 0.0-0
Cal Haladay	12	7	19.0	2.5-5 1.0-1
Ed Woods	12	5	17.0	1.0-1 1.0-1
Wayne Matthews	8	7	15.0	0.0-0 0.0-0
Malik Spencer	8	7	15.0	0.0-0 0.0-0
Nikai Martinez	9	4	13.0	0.0-0 0.0-0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 14.3
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 96.8
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 158.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 254.8

impressive 194 yards – the second most by a true freshman in program history – and one score, the lone touchdown being a game-tying 77-yard score late in the fourth quarter where he sprinted past two Terps defenders on his way to the end zone.

Marsh's outing, which also included a key 57-yard catch earlier in that fourth quarter, propelled him into the national spotlight, earning him Big Ten and Shaun Alexander Freshman of the Week honors.

And while Marsh has cooled off after that performance, totaling just two catches for 27 yards before missing the contest against Boston College with a knee injury, those who watch the true freshman in practice know he has yet to even scratch the surface with his potential on the field.

"Me recruiting him, I expect it," Michigan State wide receivers coach and former nine-year NFL wideout Courtney Hawkins said when asked about Marsh's performance against Maryland on Sept. 10. "Maybe not the numbers that he put up, but he's a talented kid, man. That won't be just a flash-in-the-bucket type of deal."

"I think it's his preparation, his overall approach to the game, his overall approach to life. He's a well-centered kid, well-grounded. He studies. He knows multiple positions on our team. He's got some leadership qualities about him. He's that kind of kid you want in your room. He's a program-changer type of athlete."

Marsh is not the only playmaker on Michigan State's offense, however. Also producing in Hawkins' wide receiver room is redshirt senior Montorie Foster Jr., who has added a team-high 17 catches for 200 yards and a touchdown after leading the Spartans with 43 receptions and 576 yards last season. Junior tight end and Oregon State transfer Jack Velling and redshirt freshman Aziah Johnson

have also contributed, combining for 290 receiving yards and a score on 18 receptions through four games.

At running back, the Spartans boast a strong one-two punch consisting of redshirt junior Nate Carter and sixth-year UMass transfer Kay'Ron Lynch-Adams. Carter, who posted career highs in rushing yards (798), carries (185) and touchdowns (four) for the Spartans last season, shrugged off a slow start this season to return to his explosive form against Prairie View A&M, rushing for a 60-yard score and finishing with 91 yards on the ground on eight carries.

"Carter opens things up," Smith said of his running back after the Prairie View A&M game. "He brought it to the second level (against Prairie View A&M), and you're not going to catch that guy often."

But the veteran tailback suffered a major setback against Boston College, rushing for a career-low 9 yards – a total that was made lower by him losing 15 yards on the night – on nine carries.

Lynch-Adams has been no slouch from the backfield in his first season with the Spartans. The veteran, who ranked 27th in the FBS last season with the Minutemen with 1,157 rushing yards, has provided another element to the unit, totaling a team-high 271 rushing yards on a gritty 49 carries – 5.5 yards per tote – along with a score.

While the Spartans' offense has experienced some success through four games, the longevity of this success could be in question following some significant injuries on the offensive line.

The Spartans have suffered two season-ending injuries at the same position since the season started, with starting right guard Kristian "Big Dooley" Phillips going down with a lower-body injury after the Maryland game, followed by his backup Gavin Broschious

OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

being carted off the field one week later against Prairie View A&M after getting rolled into on his lower left leg.

These injuries forced offensive line coach Jim Michalczyk to make some changes on the offensive line against Boston College. He called on redshirt senior Brandon Baldwin to shift from left tackle to right guard, while putting redshirt freshman Stanton Ramil at left tackle, redshirt senior Luke Newman at left guard, sixth-year Oregon State transfer and former All-Pac 12 right guard Tanner Miller at center and redshirt sophomore Ashton Lepo at right tackle.

Redshirt senior Dallas Fincher – who has played most of his college career at center – also saw time at right guard for Michigan State's offensive line, which gave up eight tackles for loss and a sack in the loss to Boston College.

"We just felt like we have three tackles that we have some confidence in, and we had the opportunity to play all three of them, and that's why Brandon was willing to go in there (at right guard)," Smith said after the game. "I'll look at the tape thoroughly to know how it all went ... We're trying to put our best five out on the field."

Injuries are also a factor with Michigan State's defense – now led by former Minnesota defensive coordinator Joe Rossi – especially in the secondary. In the teams' first four games, the Spartans have lost the services of several impact players in the back end, including cornerbacks Dillon Tatum (lower body) and Chance Rucker (right arm), who each started eight games for Michigan State last season but are out until at least November, and backup safety Khalil Majeed (lower body), who is likely out for his entire redshirt junior campaign.

These long-term injuries provide a major blow to their secondary depth, forcing the Spartans' starters to carry most of the load. Luckily for Rossi and Michigan State, the veteran defensive backs have answered the call so far this season.

Through four games, the Spartans have allowed 158.0 passing yards per game, an improved mark from last season's total (237.8) that ranks ninth in the Big Ten and tied for 26th in the nation.

Leading the Spartans' turnaround in the secondary is redshirt junior cornerback Charles Brantley, who, after initially entering his name into the transfer portal early in the offseason before withdrawing in late December, has emerged as the Spartans' top playmaker on the defense, recording a team-high two interceptions, four pass breakups and 12 tackles through four games.

Brantley's ball-hawking ability was on best display in Michigan State's blowout win over Prairie View A&M, when he totaled two tackles, a pass breakup and a Spartan-record 100-yard pick-six. It was a performance – which also included another pick-six that was called back due to a roughing the passer call – that earned him some national recognition, with Pro Football Focus grading him as the No. 1 cornerback in the nation for Week 3 at 92.1.

Starting alongside Brantley at cornerback is redshirt senior and Arizona State transfer Ed Woods and redshirt sophomore Aveon Grose (nickel), who have combined for 20 tackles so far this season.

At safety, junior UCF transfer Nikai Martinez and redshirt senior Angelo Grose lead the unit, who have shown off both their physicality and ball-hawking ability, recording 13 and 19 tackles respectively and an interception each

through four games.

In all, it's a Spartan secondary that prides itself on getting its hands on the ball and making plays, a mentality that Brantley said has been passed down by their defensive coordinator.

"We play with 'howl,' which means run until everyone gets to the ball, play with toughness and play with technique," he said.

Aggressiveness and physicality seem to be the theme on the front four, too. The Spartans' starting defensive line – made up of sophomore Jalen Thompson and redshirt senior Khris Bogle on the outside and Alex VanSumaren and D'Quan Douse on the inside – has turned up the intensity from last season, helping the Spartans' defense rank first in the Big Ten so far this season with 32 tackles for loss and 15 sacks.

Smith said it has been a total group effort on the defensive line this season, with the team committing to rotating guys in and out to avoid potential end-of-season burnout. Reserves such as Maverick Hansen (four tackles), Jalen Satchell (1½ TFL, one-half sack) and Ken Talley (two TFL, 1½ sacks) have also contributed so far this season and spelled the starters.

"Our D-line has done a nice job at the line of scrimmage," Smith said. "We're playing multiple guys there, which I think is benefiting us in terms of rotation, health, and just a lack of fatigue late in the game. I think guys are pretty fresh."

The Spartans' aggressiveness at the line of scrimmage has also been aided by the addition of Wisconsin transfer linebacker Jordan Turner, who, working alongside fellow starting linebacker Cal Haladay, leads the team in tackles this season with 22.

With all of these pieces together, the Spartan defense has allowed just 14.3 points per game, a number that ranks ninth in the Big Ten and 25th nationally. For Smith, these successes are a product of the extra effort and enthusiasm they play with each game, which he thinks comes directly from Rossi's teachings.

"Effort has been preached on defense," Smith said. "The way we practice we want to make it physical and play with great, great effort. Joe does a great job of describing it. 'Effort can be an eraser.' Mistakes can be made, guys can not be in the right fit, but if we're playing with great effort by 11 guys, it cleans up a lot of things. And that's proven true.

"These guys enjoy it. They want to play with great effort. And Joe and that whole defensive staff have been coaching that way since Day One."

Whether it's on the offensive or defensive side of the ball, there seems to be a much different aura emanating from Michigan State's locker room this season, one which has already translated to some success on the field.

The Spartans do face a much steeper challenge in Big Ten play, starting with a home contest against the talented Buckeyes followed by a trip to No. 8 Oregon on Oct. 4. These games may provide a first litmus test for Smith's Spartans this season, but regardless of the result, those who are within the rejuvenated locker room feel the program is on the right track.

"We're building something special here," Chiles said. "For all the people that didn't believe in us, stay like that, keep it that way. I mean, if you didn't want to hop on this boat now, then it is what it is – you're gone now. Get in or get left behind."



*Best Taco
Al Pastor
in the City!*



FRIDAY SPECIALS

Spicy Shrimp Tacos,
Spicy Shrimp Burritos,
Birria Tacos with Consomé,
and Quesabirrias

SATURDAY SPECIALS

Barbacoa Tacos (Shredded Beef Tacos)
Consomé de Borrego (Lamb Soup)

SUNDAY SPECIALS

Cabeza de Res Tacos
(Veal Head Tacos)

MONDAY SPECIALS

Buy One Taco Al Pastor,
Get One FREE!
22 oz Tall Draft Beer \$4.99

WEDNESDAY SPECIALS

Gringas Al Pastor Only \$2.50 each!
Micheladas \$6.99 each

MULTIPLE TV'S TO WATCH THE GAMES

All Locations Serving Alcohol with Full Bar

**DUBLIN • 7370 Sawmill Rd.
614-726-9185**

Sun-Thurs | 11am-12am • Fri & Sat | 11am-1am

**Columbus • 5221 Godown Rd.
614-538-0211**

Sun - Thur | 11am - 12am • Fri & Sat | 11am - 1am

**Gahanna • 1344 Cherry Bottom Rd.
614-471-4717**

Mon-Sun | 11am - 11pm

*New
Store!*

**Columbus • 1121 S. Hamilton Rd.
614-852-3000**

Mon-Sun | 11am - 11pm

DT Hamilton A Silent Force For Buckeyes

By **PATRICK ENGELS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Throughout the offseason, most of the attention for Ohio State's defensive line was directed toward the team's three senior returners – defensive ends Jack Sawyer and JT Tuimoloau along with defensive tackle Tyleik Williams – who are each poised for standout campaigns this season and could see their names called early in the 2025 NFL draft in April.

These three players are certainly worthy of receiving these extra eyeballs, but there is another important veteran member of Larry Johnson's Rushmen this season who has seemingly slipped through the cracks.

Sawyer, Tuimoloau and Williams may set the tone on the defensive line, but the elder statesman on Ohio State's starting front four is fifth-year defensive tackle Ty Hamilton, a lifelong Buckeye who, despite earning considerable playing time the last two seasons for the Buckeyes, has been often overlooked by those who follow Ohio State and college football as a whole.

Hamilton, a Columbus-area native and graduate of Pickerington Central High School, has been seldom talked about so far this season despite making a considerable impact on the field through the first three games, totaling 11 tackles – a mark that ranks tied for fourth on the team – and one-half sack.

But Hamilton doesn't care if he doesn't get much public recognition. All he is focusing

on is producing on the field and helping his hometown Buckeyes chase their championship goals during his final collegiate season, and he'll let everything else take care of itself.

"I don't talk too much, but I just let my play do what it does," Hamilton said earlier this summer. "I don't have to say much, but I'm going to have you feel me while I'm on the field."

Hamilton's humble mentality is something his defensive coordinator Jim Knowles has appreciated so far this season.

"Ty is quiet, but he's like a cold-blooded gentleman," Knowles said. "He really is a force that I think is sometimes maybe difficult to see, but when you watch the tape, he is knocking people back and really just creating some difficult situations for the offense."

Being overlooked as a player is something Hamilton has encountered throughout much of his football life.

Hamilton began his high school playing career at Pickerington Central under the shadow of his older brother, DaVon Hamilton, who played five seasons as a defensive tackle at Ohio State (2015-2019) before being drafted in the third round of the 2020 NFL draft by the Jacksonville Jaguars, the team he continues to play for to this day.

While the elder Hamilton was carving out a future NFL career at Ohio State, the younger Hamilton was a seldom talked about three-star high school prospect, coming in as the nation's 757th-best player in the 2020 class and 33rd-best strongside defensive end his



SONNY BROCKWAY

QUIETLY EFFECTIVE – Ty Hamilton doesn't get or want a lot of attention and is willing to let his play on the defensive line do all the talking for the 3-0 Buckeyes.

senior year.

Hamilton, who recorded an impressive 122 total tackles and 10½ sacks as a senior for the Tigers, did eventually manage to find a spot on Ohio State's roster, committing to the Buckeyes in June of 2019. But that did not mean he wouldn't still need to put in work to earn his stripes in college.

Stuck behind the likes of veteran interior defensive tackles Haskell Garrett (2017-21), Tommy Toggiai (2018-20) and Taron Vincent (2018-22), among others, Hamilton struggled to find consistent playing time on Johnson's defensive line in the early going of his Ohio State career, totaling just 12 tackles, two sacks, a fumble recovery and a pass breakup in 13 appearances in the 2021-22 season after getting into two games when he was a true freshman.

This lack of time on the field did not deter

Hamilton, who said he continued to put his head down and work toward gaining a bigger role on the team despite the slow start to his Buckeye career.

"I'm working every day," Hamilton said before the 2022 season. "You never know what could happen. Every day I'm trying to push because I want to play like I am going to be a starter. That's how I have to motivate myself. No matter if I'm a one, two or three, that's how I want to play."

Hamilton's hard work started to pay off toward the end of the 2022 campaign when the then-junior earned starts during the last five games of the season, a stretch where he totaled 10 tackles, one-half sack, one quarterback hurry and a pass breakup.

Hamilton even saved his best for last that year, recording what was then a career-high three-tackle performance in the Buckeyes'



Is proud to be a CBD partner with



For all your wellness needs
cbd hemp health.com



30% OFF ALL PRODUCTS

Must present coupon in-store. One coupon per customer. Valid through 2024. Offer only available at Columbus Botanical Depot. Use code "clean15" at check out online.

Columbus Ohio's first CBD store.
 Find out today how CBD could help you.



14 W. Pacemont Road
 Columbus, OH 43202

HOURS
 10:30am - 8pm
 EVERY DAY

chocolate café

FINE CHOCOLATES • COFFEES • DESSERTS • SPIRITS & PEOPLE



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

We can cater your tailgate party!

Parties • Corporate Catering

Weddings • Baby & Bridal Showers • Tailgates!



narrow College Football Playoff semifinal loss to Georgia.

Being able to produce in a starting capacity for the Scarlet and Gray that season was a major achievement in Hamilton's college career.

"Honestly, it just felt like an accomplishment," Hamilton said in November of 2022. "I work every single day, and being able to start, it's just a surreal feeling to be able to do this. Even if I wasn't starting, I just want to help the team and do whatever I can for the team."

Hamilton's strong end to the 2022 season propelled him to an even larger role with Knowles' defense in 2023 when the then-fourth-year senior started eight games for the Buckeyes and tallied a career-high 38 tackles, 4½ tackles for loss, a quarterback hurry and two sacks.

His best performance last season came on the road against Rutgers, where he totaled a career-best six tackles and an essentially game-clinching sack on fourth down in the Scarlet Knights' red zone. That career high in tackles was then matched in Ohio State's Cotton Bowl loss against Missouri, where he also had two tackles for loss.

But while Hamilton's efforts earned him All-Big Ten honorable mention at the end of the season, he was still seldom talked about compared to his defensive line counterparts Sawyer, Tuimolou and Williams.

That is appearing to change in 2024, however. Now fully in a starting role at defensive tackle alongside his longtime teammate Williams – with whom Hamilton has embraced the nickname "TNT" for this season as a clever reference to their explosiveness on the inside – Hamilton has taken full advantage of his extra opportunity so far this season, and those who have seen him grow throughout the years at Ohio State are quick to let the masses hear about it.

"He's been making an impact since I've been here, but he has developed into a dominant player," Knowles said. "He's a guy who can control the interior of the line of scrimmage, and that's a big deal. I've always said when your defensive tackles make tackles, it allows you to do other things in coverage and how many people you commit down to the box."

"This is a great example of somebody who is from Ohio, who put a lot of great work into the program, put blood, sweat, and tears in," head coach Ryan Day said. "And he has now become a very, very good football player. He saw his brother go through the same process. But he's his own guy. And he doesn't say a whole lot but lets his play do the talking."

"He's just been consistent. He's been durable," Day added. "He's been somebody that we can count on. He's worked really, really hard every day. He doesn't make it about him. He's a great team player. The guys on the team have so much respect for Ty."

Hamilton's "dominant" start on the defensive line so far this season can be attributed to some tweaks he made to his game during the offseason.

He said he worked all winter and spring with Johnson to fine-tune his pass-rushing skills, which he thinks has made him a more versatile player who can beat his opponent no matter where he is lined up on the defensive line.

"I think it's improved a lot," Hamilton said. "Just being with Coach (Johnson), it's one of the things that we worked on a lot every day. We would do pass-rush drills, working from outside to inside. So just doing that every single day, it really made it better."

These improvements were perhaps best on display in Ohio State's 56-0 blowout win over Western Michigan on Sept. 7, where he helped preserve the Buckeyes' first shutout in five years by recording one-half sack and four total tackles. It was a performance that earned him Defensive Player of the Game – as decided on by the team – and allowed him to be graded out as a "champion," at 96 percent.

This type of impact, which was also felt in Ohio State's 49-14 win over Marshall on Sept. 21, where he recorded three tackles on a Buckeyes' defensive line that was missing Williams due to injury, was expected by his defensive line coach this summer. He said just 10 days before the season started that Hamilton would be a dominant and physical force on the inside for the Buckeye defense, especially if he is put in one-on-one situations with opposing offensive linemen.

"He's strong. He's powerful," said Johnson – who also labeled Hamilton a "sleeping giant" – on Aug. 21. "Nose guard is a tough position to rush the passer because you're going to get doubled a lot. He can get lost in the midst of rushing the passer, but you leave him one-on-one, he's got a chance to change the game."

Hamilton also credits his improvements this season to the overall greater sense of confidence and comfort he has in Ohio State's system, which he thinks allows him to play with more aggressiveness and have a better knowledge of the game.

"Being out there and knowing exactly what I'm going to do and knowing what my opponents are going to do allows me to play better and play faster," Hamilton said. "Experience comes with confidence."

But beyond his play on the field, perhaps the largest impact Hamilton is making on this year's team is with his leadership. While he admits to being soft-spoken on the field, he has made it a priority this season to use his voice more as the longest-tenured Buckeye on Johnson's defensive line.

This is especially the case with some of the younger defensive linemen on the roster, who he thinks could benefit from hearing from his past experiences as a player who has gradually moved up the ladder on Johnson's defensive

line unit.

"Just being able to share my experience," Hamilton said. "Being an older guy, a lot of the younger guys look up to the older guys. So I can share my experience and teach younger guys and pass on wisdom that I have. It makes me a better player and helps me be a better leader."

His teammates have taken notice of the added voice Hamilton is providing this season.

"I'd say Ty is definitely more of a leader now," Williams said. "He leads the whole D-line, the whole interior. He's that head guy you go to if you need advice for anything, and he leads as a great example for the young guys."

Whether he is making an impact with his voice or with his play on the field, Hamilton has transformed himself from a little-known three-star high school prospect into a major player on a formidable Buckeye defense that many consider to be the best in all of college football.

It's a slow rise to prominence at Ohio State that has impressed his head coach – who predicted Hamilton to be an All-Big Ten player

this year – and one that he thinks serves as an important lesson for his players to keep persevering, no matter where they are on the depth chart.

"They see it," Day said. "They see a guy who's now playing like this. And you're like, 'OK, so how did you get there?' He didn't just show up and all of a sudden it started happening. I mean, every position and every person has their own journey."

"Playing defensive line, there's a lot that comes with it. The stance, the alignment, the hand placement, being able to sustain that from a physical standpoint. So when you have somebody who you can look up to that's been through the program for these many years and put the work in, it does send a great message through that room."

"He's not somebody that garners a whole bunch of attention or makes it about him. He's the ultimate team player. He goes to work every day and you can just count on him to be there. And those are the people that a great team needs – a foundation of people who are unselfish, hardworking, understand what it means to be a Buckeye. And now he's become a very, very good player."

Ohio State Fans!



**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, \$119.95
- 2 Years, \$199.95
- 1 Year, First Class Mail, \$189.95
- 2 Years, First Class Mail, \$339.95

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

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

Reese Forcing His Way Into Linebacker Rotation

By **GREG WILSON**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Ohio State's linebacker depth last season didn't go very far. Tommy Eichenberg and Steele Chambers started and got most of the playing time while Cody Simon rotated in when it was needed. So when Eichenberg and Chambers left for the NFL, the position was possibly the only one on the defense that was a question mark coming into the new season.

When new linebackers coach James Laurinaitis was hired into his full-time position with the team in February, he said that he hoped there would be more rotation in the new season but that would be up to the players themselves.

"The vision that I have for our room is hopefully we come out of this spring with at least four guys who have earned the right to play," Laurinaitis said the first time he spoke to the media after he was hired on Feb. 20. "That's my hope. I don't know if that will happen. The season is going to be really long with the 12-team playoff. We're going to have to rotate. If only two guys show up and prove they're trustworthy, then two will play."

Going into the year, defensive coordinator Jim Knowles felt like Simon, Sonny Styles and C.J. Hicks had earned the right to play. But when the Buckeyes got off to somewhat of a slow start in Week 1 against Akron with Simon out with an injury, sophomore Arvell Reese stepped in and impressed with four total tackles, one for loss. He began the second half on the field in the spot where Hicks started the game – that being Will linebacker – and earned himself a bigger role against Western Michigan a week later.

He finished the 56-0 win over the Broncos with three tackles and made his presence felt every time he was on the field, something his veteran teammates noticed.

"He's taken it to another level," Simon said after the Western Michigan game when asked about the way Reese prepares for games. "He's just becoming more ready and learning to take better notes and learning to watch more film. And it really comes with being a linebacker. You have to know almost everything now. So he's doing a really good job. I'm really proud of him."

"He's just showed a good grasp of the defense," Styles added. "He knows what he's doing, knows how to run the defense. The dude just plays hard. We all mess up. He might mess up sometimes, but he's going to play hard right at the ball. That's the thing that pops out on film, sideline to sideline, he's getting to the ball."

According to Pro Football Focus, Reese played more snaps than every Buckeye linebacker other than Styles in the first two weeks. The increased role has largely been due to the two games being blowout wins over two Mid-American Conference opponents and the fact that Simon missed Week 1 with an injury. But when Reese's number was called, he was able to prove that he deserves to be on the field.

Like Styles said, Reese was making plays sideline to sideline. In the Week 1 52-6 win over Akron, there were multiple examples of Reese reading a play well and getting



SONNY BROCKWAY

NEXT MAN UP — Arvell Reese (20) has risen up the depth chart to become an integral part of the Ohio State linebacker corps after an impressive start to the season.

to the ball quickly to help get the ball back to Ohio State's offense.

"It adds another guy," Knowles said about Reese proving he should be on the field. "His growth has really been fantastic. He's been through some lulls as a younger guy. He's gone through some ups and downs. It's like a daily thing in practice, and now he's on a path of sustained production. You see him jumping off the film, playing fast. That adds to our depth at that position, which is really important, particularly when you get into three-linebacker looks."

Despite coming into Ohio State last season as a four-star prospect out of football factory Cleveland Glenville – which has churned out several top Ohio State players over the years such as Tedd Ginn Jr., Cardale Jones and Troy Smith – Reese wasn't set to make much of an impact at linebacker as a freshman, especially with Eichenberg and Chambers still in Columbus.

But coaches also decided that they wanted to try him at the defensive end position since they believed that he was going to continue to put on weight and had the speed needed to break around the edge of an offensive line toward the passer.

"I can't remember what the conversations were," Reese said. "They just thought I could be an edge because of how quick I was, and they thought I was going to gain a lot of weight," Reese said. "I was already 235 (pounds) last year, so they thought I'd be at least like 250 by this time, but I'm still 240."

Officially listed at 6-4, 238 pounds, Reese's transition back to linebacker has been a good one that he said he wanted to make because he likes the position better. Part of the reason he didn't get on the field last season as a true freshman was because of the depth at the edge rusher position along

with a concussion Reese suffered on a kickoff in the 35-7 win over Youngstown State last year.

He missed nearly half of the season because of it and said it was a tough time for him because an injury has never kept him out as long as that one did. But getting back onto the field after that and earning playing time was a simple process according to Reese, who said he just needed to work harder in practice and study the playbook. He admitted that as a freshman he didn't take his preparation as seriously as he feels he should have.

"It wasn't really difficult. I knew I wasn't seeing the field because of what I was doing," Reese said. "I wasn't really into the playbook. I was really all over the place. So, it wasn't difficult, I knew what the problem was, and that's what I changed. I completely changed from last year. This year, I'm in the playbook, I'm watching film, I'm with my coach. That's the difference."

"(It wasn't) a lack of confidence, but a lack of seriousness," Reese added. "Last year I felt like I was just here. I wasn't really involved, I was just here."

His teammates know how good he can be if he continues to work the way he is.

"That's kind of scary for me because when he starts getting more and more seasoned and into his roles, he's going to be a monster," Simon said about Reese's newfound motivation. "So I'm just excited for his future and what he can do for us."

He continued his strong play in Week 3 against Marshall, finishing the game with five tackles including one for loss.

Reese said his attitude switch could have been because of the position change to defensive end in his first season. It wasn't that he doubted that he could contribute, but there might have been a lack of focus be-

cause he enjoys linebacker more and wanted to be there instead.

"I like linebacker more because I feel like I'm more free," Reese said. "I like edge too, but at linebacker, I can make a bunch of plays at linebacker."

Some of that work has been making sure he's ready for anything other teams are going to bring at him when game time comes around, while also perfecting his individual play.

"I just go over the mistakes that I made yesterday," Reese said. "You can't make the same mistakes. We're all going to make some mistakes, but we can't make the same mistakes twice. I just go over the mistakes and watch film on the other teams so I can know what's coming."

He credits both Laurinaitis and Simon as two people who have helped him get to the point he's at now.

"Coach Laurinaitis made me really realize that I could do it and actually play," Reese said. "He always said that if I put the time in, I could do it."

"I learned a lot from (the other linebackers), especially Cody," he added. "Cody plays the Mike position, so me being behind him, I can just watch him and learn from him. When he's doing walk-throughs, I'm locked in learning."

When it comes to being at the Mike linebacker position, diving further into the playbook and watching more film is necessary to excel in the spot since they are the "quarterback of the defense," meaning they are responsible for making sure the rest of their teammates on the field know the play and are in the right spots.

"There's a lot that goes into playing at the Mike," Knowles said. "There's a lot of details of the game and formations and checks. (Reese is) constantly getting better at that."

That preparation has been obvious to both Reese's coaches and to everyone watching the game. The ability to know a play and be prepared to go sideline to sideline is not only due to effort, but according to Knowles, it takes knowing the defensive schemes inside and out.

"He has made tremendous improvements since he arrived here," Knowles said. "You're seeing him play fast. He's got tremendous physical tools, so for a linebacker, it's just a matter of knowing what to do and not having to think about it. What you're seeing out of Arvell now is he's understanding where all the pieces go, and he's able to play fast without thinking."

Now fully at linebacker, Reese wants to make every play he can when he's out on the field, a mentality that he knows is needed at his position where he must be prepared to stop the run and the pass and everything in between.

"I feel like at linebacker, you have to have a mindset that you want to make every tackle," Reese said. "So that's the mindset that I have going out there. I want to be at least near every tackle."

"I feel like I have to be around every play or make every play. So that's why I'm always running to the ball because you never know what could happen. The ball could pop out. You could get a pick from that, just running to the ball and being around the ball."

Siereveld Taking Strides Early In New Season

By **BOBBY GORBETT**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Of all the pundits and experts giving out opinions in the college football world, very few, if any, predicted redshirt freshman guard Austin Siereveld would make such an impact so quickly on the Ohio State offensive line at the time of his commitment to the 2023 class. He came into the program as a four-star recruit according to 247Sports' composite ranking, but he wasn't exactly a blue-chip prospect.

In Ohio State's 21-man recruiting class, Siereveld was the 17th-highest-ranked player, as the 300th-ranked recruit in the country. Even along the offensive line, Siereveld was the third-highest ranked player in Ohio State's four-man offensive line class. Despite that, Siereveld has surged past many of his fellow Buckeyes on the depth chart who were ranked ahead of him at the time of his commitment, starting in the team's first two games of the 2024 season in place of the veteran Donovan Jackson who missed them due to an injury.

Siereveld's surge into Ohio State's starting lineup, becoming one of only two players, along with Carnell Tate, from the 2023 class to start in both of the team's first two games, would have even surprised the 6-5, 320-pound offensive lineman himself at the time of his commitment.

"I knew that in year two I was going to see some playing time," Siereveld said. "Now starting Week 1, year two, I didn't see that, but I was ready in spring ball."

To be fair to the Middletown, Ohio, native, hardly anyone knew Siereveld would start in Ohio State's 52-6 win over Akron until it was revealed shortly before the game that Jackson would be out.

Siereveld knew he would make his first career start only when Jackson told him the news and gave him a vote of confidence, simply saying it was no different than what he had gone through in practice.

Siereveld's placement into the lineup wasn't out of default. It was a process that began during his true freshman season when Siereveld cut his teeth on the scout team in a year he would redshirt. Players are still eligible to retain their redshirts if they play four games or fewer during the season, meaning he was eligible to get some brief playing time in the team's 14-3 Cotton Bowl loss to Missouri.

It wasn't until training camp rolled around that Siereveld made a name for himself within the offensive line room.

Siereveld was one of a few beneficiaries of extra playing time due to a stomach virus that made its way around the Ohio State offensive line room, putting rotational players such as Siereveld in a position to get needed experience with the team's starters in fall camp. It was during this period that Siereveld established himself as a player who was ready to contribute.

"It really did accelerate my growth. I jumped in there," Siereveld said. "It took me like one or two practices, but after those, I was good. My confidence grew."

Playing with the starters didn't just mean that Siereveld was playing with the best players on the team's offense, but also



SONNY BROCKWAY

LINE OF SUCCESSION — With Donovan Jackson missing the first two games because of an injury, Austin Siereveld has taken advantage to become a reliable force on the offensive line.

that he was going against the best players on defense. Defensive tackles Tyleik Williams and Ty Hamilton, who primarily matched up against Siereveld, have both grown into All-Big Ten caliber players in the last couple of seasons and provided great experiences for the guard in practice.

"It definitely was in training camp," Siereveld said when asked about when he knew he could play at the Big Ten level. "Blocking Tyleik and Ty every day builds a lot of confidence, doing it well and not getting mauled or anything."

Through his share of reps in practice, Siereveld not only gained the attention of the coaching staff, who decided to give him the start, but also his fellow offensive linemen.

"I feel like Austin has taken such a big jump this year from last year," senior offensive lineman Zen Michalski said on Aug. 22. "I didn't see him a whole bunch last year because I think he was primarily on the scout team. But this year, spring ball, I saw him take some strides, but this camp especially, Austin has stepped up so much."

"I'm super impressed (with Siereveld)," said senior offensive tackle Josh Fryar. "Obviously you can see the tree trunks on that guy. His legs are huge. He's super athletic. He bends really well, and he's good with his hands in pass protection. So just seeing that and him getting playing experience is just incredibly huge for him, and I think it's going to do great things for him in the future."

With all of the experience and positive

results Siereveld was getting in camp, he felt ready to go in his first-ever career start in the Buckeyes' season-opening 52-6 win over Akron.

Like the rest of the offense, Siereveld may have been a bit uptight early against the Zips, which is understandable considering it was his first career start, but he settled into the game quickly.

"First game, obviously you're going to have nerves being a first-time starter, but then after the first couple of plays, I was good," Siereveld said. "I was just rolling."

For Siereveld, his start wasn't just an important part of a productive offensive line performance but the fulfillment of a dream he had while growing up in Ohio.

"It was always my dream to come here and play and start," Siereveld said. "I've just got to keep going, keep building those games."

Siereveld was good in the first week, but the Ohio State offensive line might have left some things to be desired in an inconsistent first half.

But in the Week 2 win over Western Michigan, the offensive line didn't seem to skip a beat without the presence of Jackson. The Buckeyes rushed for 273 yards on 39 carries, good enough for an average of 7.0 yards a carry, which according to Ohio State starting center Seth McLaughlin had to do with the improvement of Siereveld from game one to game two.

"One hundred percent, I think he did a good job of taking my challenge to him and just coming out and playing hard," McLaughlin said when asked if Siereveld had improved between the first and second

games of the season.

Unfortunately for Siereveld, his time as a starter came to an end on Sept. 21 after Jackson returned from his injury, but that certainly isn't the end of his story on the 2024 team. After saying Jackson would play in the game against Marshall, head coach Ryan Day said that he felt Siereveld still deserved to be on the field.

"We're going to try to find ways to get Austin in the game because we feel like he's earned that opportunity," Day said.

Ohio State offensive coordinator Chip Kelly had a similar sentiment about Siereveld's first two games.

"Austin played really well himself," Kelly said. "I think Austin took full advantage of the reps that he got in the two games that he was in there, so we'll continue to monitor that situation."

Day and the rest of the Buckeye coaching staff fulfilled that promise when Siereveld received some brief playing time in the team's 49-14 win over Marshall. Siereveld flashed his athleticism when he pulled around from one side of the offensive line to the other to get in front of a Marshall defender, aiding running back TreVeyon Henderson into the end zone on a 14-yard touchdown run.

As a whole, the Buckeyes' offensive line had an outstanding performance. The group created holes in the run game to allow Ohio State rushers to gain 280 yards on 31 attempts, good enough for an average of 9.0 yards per attempt. In pass protection, the offensive line was similarly efficient, conceding only one sack of quarterback Will Howard.

One of the ways the Buckeyes are trying to get Siereveld snaps could be at the offensive tackle position. Having played the position in high school, Siereveld is perfectly willing to practice there if that's what the team needs of him.

"Wherever they need me, if it's left or right, wherever I need to go in, I go in and block the dude in front of me," Siereveld said.

Siereveld and his teammates feel like the experience he obtained in his first two games with the Buckeyes is something that sets him ahead of many of the other players his age.

"It's huge. Austin got (game experience) his (redshirt freshman) year," Fryar said. "I got it my junior year, so he's getting it earlier than I was. It's huge for him to play in a game, understand what's the game speed is like, if it's different from practice and stuff. I think he'd say it's probably easier than practice, because we're always anticipating something instead of just reacting to it."

Now it doesn't matter that Siereveld wasn't as highly touted as many of his fellow Buckeye teammates, as he has now grown into one of the most significant pieces of an improved Ohio State offensive line.

"I'm more confident," Siereveld said. "I know what's going on. I can see what's going on with the defense. I know what's coming. My understanding of the game is a lot better than what it was last year."

Dobbins' Running Gives Harbaugh A Charge

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It's a good thing J.K. Dobbins is proving to be an elite running back again. Otherwise, the jabs at his new boss might not be received so well.

Dobbins, the loyal former Ohio State star that he is, went on ESPN's "The Pat McAfee Show" the day after the Los Angeles Chargers' season-opening 22-10 win over the Las Vegas Raiders and gave his opinion on the sign-stealing scandal at Michigan under then-coach Jim Harbaugh, who left for the Chargers job after leading the Wolverines to the 2023 national championship.

The subject of Harbaugh winning his final three games against the Buckeyes after Dobbins' departure came up.

"We're not going to get into that because I love him. That's my coach right now," Dobbins said on Sept. 9. "But, as an Ohio State person, I don't think those games will count. Look, I love Coach. He's a great coach. He's a winner. But he had a person on his staff (Connor Stalions) that ... those games might not count."

Dobbins for his part went 3-0 vs. Harbaugh, including his last game vs. U-M in 2019 when he rushed for 211 yards and four touchdowns in a 56-27 win in Ann Arbor.

He couldn't resist another dig at Harbaugh immediately following the Raiders' game in which Dobbins, in his first regular-season game in 12 months, rushed for 135 yards and a touchdown on 10 carries, telling CBS' Tracy Wolfson, "I love him (Harbaugh). I had beat him a few times in college. Three times."

The truth is that despite the bitter collegiate rivalry, there is mutual respect and a healthy relationship between Dobbins and Harbaugh, or should it be said, the Harbaughs.

"He loves football," Harbaugh said. "He's like me. Put us on the football field and there's joy there."

Dobbins was selected 55th overall in the 2020 NFL draft by the Baltimore Ravens, coached by the less toxic Harbaugh, John.

After a strong rookie season in 2020 in which he had 805 yards (6.0 average) and nine touchdowns in 15 games, he was plagued by serious injuries the next three seasons before being released.

He was hurt in the final 2021 preseason game and missed the entire season due to a torn ACL. He missed nine games in 2022 (two recovering from the ACL injury and seven due to other knee issues). Then he missed 16 games last season after tearing his Achilles in Week 1.

In all, Dobbins played in only 27 (12 starts) of 74 regular- and postseason games for the Ravens before being signed by the Chargers on April 18 to a one-year, \$1.6 million contract.

He had no qualms going coast to coast to play for another Harbaugh.

"I love him so much," Dobbins said of Jim. "I've had family ties with him because I've played for his brother (John). And I've played against him (in the Big Ten). So we've kind of been near each other. But now playing for him – he's one of a kind. He

cracks us up."

High Praise

A healthy Dobbins was exactly what Jim Harbaugh needed for his tried-and-true reputation as a run-first coach. He was rewarded when Dobbins rushed for the 135 yards in the first game.

"I didn't like J.K.'s performance," Harbaugh said, "I loved it, in all ways."

Dobbins was the third player in the past 30 years to have multiple 45-yard or longer runs (46 and 61 yards) in a Week 1 game, and his 13.5 yards per carry was the best by a player in the first week of the season with a minimum of 10 rushes.

"There's not too many things that are more impressive than when you see somebody that has a season-ending injury that comes back and then is up to that same standard, maybe even a little better: faster, quicker, stronger," Harbaugh said. "What you know when that takes place is the grueling rehab – he definitely put in the work, and he's done it with a smile on his face and a bounce to his step."

Dobbins said his hard work paid off.

"Everyone thought I was finished, but that's not how I'm wired," Dobbins told USA Today Sports. "I grew up with hard workers. I grew up not with a rich family and stuff like that. So the only thing I know to do is just keep working, keep fighting. Keep a smile on my face too while doing it."

He followed an impressive opener with 131 yards and a score on 17 rushes in the 26-3 win against the Carolina Panthers on Sept. 15.

He was the first player in franchise history to rush for 100 yards in back-to-back games to start a season and became just the sixth player in the NFL in the last 75 years and first since 1998 to record consecutive games with 130-plus yards on the ground and a rushing score in his team's first two games.

His 266 yards on 27 carries (9.9 avg.) led the NFL after two games.

"He's a guy that speaks in the locker room and everybody respects him," said quarterback Justin Herbert. "We're not surprised by his success. We knew how special he was."

Dobbins, 25, didn't like that he got caught from behind on his two long runs in the opener, so he made amends vs. the Panthers with a 43-yarder that culminated with a flip in the end zone after the score.

The acrobatic move caused Chargers general manager Joe Hortiz to cringe, and he asked Dobbins not to do it again. Harbaugh, as only Harbaugh can, offered his support and wonderment for Dobbins' flip.

"That's something I've never been able to do," the coach said. "I know people can do it rather easily. Something I always tried to do. I mean, I've tried to flip off a diving board into the water. I've tried to do it off of a trampoline."

"I mean, only tried it once off of just the ground like he did it, and pretty much every time, for some reason, I stopped midturn. So just cool. I always admire people that could do that. It's something I'm missing, not getting that last part of it."



FILE PHOTO

BUCKING THE TREND — After being injured for most of the past four seasons with the Baltimore Ravens, a healthy J.K. Dobbins of the Los Angeles Chargers led the NFL in rushing through the first two games.

Record Run

Dobbins and San Francisco running back Jordan Mason (who had games of 100 and 147 yards) entered their third games on Sept. 22 with an opportunity to become the seventh and eighth players in league history to run for at least 100 yards and a touchdown in their first three games.

The others are Jim Brown, with his first six games in 1958, O.J. Simpson (five, in 1975), DeMarco Murray (four, in 2014), Emmitt Smith (four, in 1995), Dalvin Cook (three, in 2019), and Curtis Martin (three, in 2004).

Dobbins fell short of the record when he was limited to 44 yards on 15 carries (2.9) in a 20-10 loss to the Justin Fields-led Pittsburgh Steelers. His longest run was 13 yards and he made three catches for 10 yards (3.3).

The score was 10-10 when Herbert exited in the third quarter, possibly re-injuring a high-ankle sprain from the previous game. The Steelers (3-0) went ahead 17-10 when Fields, the former OSU quarterback, had a 55-yard TD pass to Calvin Austin III midway through the fourth quarter.

Mason fared better but it wasn't good enough in a 27-24 loss to the Ravens when he rushed for 77 yards on 19 attempts (4.1). His longest run was 18 yards.

Dobbins' successful transition to the Chargers was made easier by some familiar faces from Baltimore. Hortiz was the director of player personnel for the Ravens from 2019-23; LA offensive coordinator Greg Roman was his first coordinator there; assistant GM Chad Alexander spent time in the organization; and Gus Edwards was his backfield mate.

The Chargers were 25th in rushing last season, so a strong running game will aid Herbert.

"Coach Roman's trying to teach us to have a balance," Herbert said. "We've done a great job of running the first couple of games. Coach Roman, he's done a great job

getting us in a position to succeed.

"It's definitely super helpful going out there and knowing that you can hand the ball to J.K. and Gus and they're going to fight for every yard. And so, when we take our shots, take what the defense gives us, especially in the passing game, it's only going to help us.

"I think my job as a quarterback is just to be a point guard, to get them the ball, to get us in the right looks. Give the ball to the playmakers, let them go make the plays. As long as I'm doing that, I'm doing my job."

All the attention on Dobbins has some in the media putting him as the front-runner for AP Comeback Player of the Year, but he's not surprised by his recovery.

"It's my story," he said. "This guy had an ACL and an Achilles, and he's still here. Some people, maybe most people, would have retired. Or they can't find a way to get over the hump. But I'm still here because all I know how to do is keep fighting and keep going."

Unfortunately, injuries have been a major part of his career, beginning at La Grange (Texas) High School when he missed all but one play of his senior season after breaking a bone in his right leg.

That didn't deter him from a storied career at Ohio State. In 2019 he became the first back in school history to top the 2,000-yard mark, finishing with 2,003 yards and 21 touchdowns. His 4,459 career yards are second in program history to Archie Griffin's 5,589.

He never missed a game in his three seasons. Then came the rash of injuries in the NFL.

"You got the injury-prone (label) out there, but I think the storm is over with, and I think I'm going to take off now," he said in April. "There'll be no setbacks, and this injury-prone thing will be gone out the window."

So far, he's been true to his word.

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (3-0)

Aug. 31 AKRON, W 52-6.

Sept. 7 WESTERN MICHIGAN, W 56-0; **21** MARSHALL, W 49-14; **28** at Michigan State.

Oct. 5 IOWA; **12** at Oregon; **26** NEBRASKA.

Nov. 2 at Penn State; **9** PURDUE; **16** vs. Northwestern at Wrigley Field; **23** INDIANA; **30** MICHIGAN.

CROSS COUNTRY

Aug. 30 Tommy Evans Invitational at Norton, Ohio, Men: 1st/8, Women: 2nd/10.

Sept. 20 Roy Griak Invitational at Minneapolis, Men: 5th/17, Women: 7th/17.

Oct. 4 Loyola Lakefront Invitational at Chicago; **19** Wisconsin Pre-Nationals at Madison, Wis.

Nov. 1 Big Ten Championships at Champaign, Ill. **15** NCAA Regional Championships at Norton, Ohio; **18** NCAA Championships at Madison, Wis.

FIELD HOCKEY (8-0)

Aug. 30 UALBANY, W 6-1.

Sept. 1 BUCKNELL, W 4-1; **6** at Colgate, W 5-0; **8** at Syracuse, W 5-0; **13** at Richmond, W 2-0; **15** at Old Dominion, W 2-1; **20** MICHIGAN STATE, W 4-0; **22** BROWN, W 5-2; **29** LOUISVILLE.

Oct. 6 at Michigan; **11** PENN STATE; **13** KENT STATE; **18** at Maryland; **20** at Rutgers; **25** INDIANA; **27** IOWA.

Nov. 1 at Northwestern; **3** CENTRAL MICHIGAN.

MEN'S GOLF

Sept. 9 Folds of Honor Collegiate at Grand Haven, Mich., 7th/15; **10** Folds of Honor Collegiate at Grand Haven, Mich., 7th/15; **11** Folds of Honor Collegiate at Grand Haven, Mich., 7th/15; **23-24** The Tindall at Fall City, Wash.; **30** Blessings Collegiate Invitational at Fayetteville, Ark.

Oct. 2 Blessings Collegiate

Invitational at Fayetteville, Ark. **7-8** Barbara Nicklaus Cup at Dublin, Ohio; **28-30** East Lake Cup at Atlanta.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Sept. 9 Folds of Honor Collegiate at Grand Haven, Mich., 2nd/15; **10** Folds of Honor Collegiate at Grand Haven, Mich., 3rd/15; **11** Folds of Honor Collegiate at Grand Haven, Mich., 3rd/15; **30-Oct. 2** Blessings Collegiate Invitational at Fayetteville, Ark.

Oct. 7-8 Barbara Nicklaus Cup at Dublin, Ohio; **20-21** Jim West Challenge at San Marcos, Texas.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY

Oct. 6 Niagara (ex.); **11-12** AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL; **18-19** at Wisconsin; **25-26** BOWLING GREEN.

Nov. 1-2 LAKE SUPERIOR STATE; **8-9** at Michigan State; **15-16** at Lindenwood; **29-30** at Princeton.

Dec. 6-7 PENN STATE; **13-14** NOTRE DAME.

Jan. 3 vs. Michigan at Wrigley Field in Chicago; **5** at Michigan; **10-11** MINNESOTA; **24-25** at Penn State; **30-31** MICHIGAN STATE.

Feb. 7-8 at Notre Dame; **14-15** WISCONSIN; **21-22** at Minnesota; **27-28** MICHIGAN.

WOMEN'S ICE

HOCKEY (0-2-0, 0-2-0)

Sept. 21-22 MINNESOTA DULUTH, L 2-1; L 4-3; **27-28** at Bemidji State.

Oct. 4-5 at St. Lawrence; **11-12** MINNESOTA; **18-19** at St. Cloud State; **22** MERCYHURST; **25-26** ICEBREAKER TOURNAMENT

vs. STONEHILL, CORNELL OR PENN STATE.

Nov. 1-2 at St. Thomas; **15-16** WISCONSIN; **22-23** at Minnesota State.

Dec. 2 at Mercyhurst.

Jan. 2 at Wisconsin; **4** at Wrigley Field in Chicago vs. Wisconsin; **10-11** BEMIDJI STATE; **17-18** at Minnesota

Duluth; **24-25** MINNESOTA STATE; **31** at Minnesota.

Feb. 1 at Minnesota; **7-8** ST. THOMAS; **21-22** ST. CLOUD STATE; **28** WCHA Quarterfinals.

March 1-2 WCHA Quarterfinals.

MEN'S SOCCER (7-0-1, 2-0-0)

Aug. 22 CLEVELAND STATE, T 1-1; **25** at Akron, W 2-0; **29** SIUE, W 4-0.

Sept. 1 UNLV, W 3-2; **8** XAVIER, W, 3-1; **13** BUTLER, W 1-0; **17** at Penn State, W 5-0; **22** RUTGERS, W 3-0; **27** INDIANA.

Oct. 4 at Michigan; **7** WASHINGTON; **11** at UCLA; **19** at Wisconsin; **25** NORTHWESTERN; **29** MICHIGAN STATE.

Nov. 3 at Maryland; **7** Big Ten Tournament quarterfinals; **10** Big Ten Tournament semifinals; **17** Big Ten Tournament finals.

WOMEN'S

SOCCER (7-1-2, 2-0-1)

Aug. 15 DUKE, W 1-0; **22** MILWAUKEE, W 4-0; **25** ASHLAND, W 3-1; **29** SOUTH CAROLINA, T 1-1.

Sept. 5 at Navy, W 4-0; **8** at Auburn, L 1-0; **12** at Indiana, W 3-0; **15** BROWN, W 2-0; **19** IOWA, T 1-1; **22** NORTHWESTERN, W 2-1; **26** MICHIGAN STATE; **29** at Michigan.

Oct. 4 MARYLAND; **10** MINNESOTA; **13** at Purdue; **17** at USC; **20** at UCLA; **27** PENN STATE.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Sept. 13-15 Debbie Southern Furman Fall Classic at Greenville, S.C.; **21-29** ITA All-American Championships at Cary, N.C.

Oct. 4-6 Notre Dame Invitational at South Bend, Ind.; **10-14** ITA Midwest Regionals at Columbus, Ohio; **25-27** UT Home Invitational at Knoxville, Tenn..

Nov. 7-10 ITA Central

Section Championships at Ann Arbor, Mich.; **7-10** ITA Conference Masters Championships at San Diego, Calif.; **19-24** NCAA Singles and Doubles Championships at Waco, Texas.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (7-3)

Aug. 30 at Dayton Flyer Invitational vs. Florida International, W 3-0; **31** at Dayton Flyer Invitational vs. Northern Iowa, W 3-1.

Sept. 6 at Florida Tournament vs. Southern Indiana, W 3-1; **7** at Florida Tournament vs. South Florida, L 3-2; **8** at Florida Tournament vs. Florida, L 3-1; **13** MIAMI (FL), W 3-0; **14** BUFFALO, W 3-2; **15** WRIGHT STATE, L 3-1; **20** at Bowling Green, W 3-1; **22** BOWLING GREEN, W 3-0; **27** at USC; **29** at UCLA.

Oct. 3 OREGON; **6** at Indiana; **10** at Northwestern; **13** MICHIGAN; **18** PENN STATE; **19** NEBRASKA; **23** at Purdue; **27** MINNESOTA; **31** IOWA.

Nov. 3 at Michigan State; **8** at Michigan; **9** at Illinois; **15** MARYLAND; **16** RUTGERS; **22** WASHINGTON; **24** INDIANA; **27** at Wisconsin; **29** at Minnesota.

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@buckeye-sports.com or mail them to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212.

OSU's First All-American? Hint: It Wasn't Harley

Throughout the 2024 football season, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* will publish historical stories from seasons ending in the numeral "4." This week, BSB looks back at the 1914 season as the Ohio State program enters its second season as a member of the Western Conference and celebrates its first-ever All-America player.

By **MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

Ask a typical Ohio State fan the name of the university's first football All-American, and chances are good the reply would be Chic Harley.

That reply would be incorrect.

Harley was the first three-time All-American in program history, winning his first honor as a sophomore in 1916. But preceding him by two years was Boyd Cherry, an outstanding offensive and defensive end who became the first OSU gridiron star ever bestowed with All-America honors.

Cherry earned a host of postseason awards for his play during the 1914 season as Ohio State posted a 5-2 record and finished fourth in the Western Conference standings with two wins and two losses.

Cherry was a rugged individual with movie star looks who played nearly every down of his senior season. He was a multidimensional player, equally adept with his blocking prowess, pass-catching skills, heads-up defensive play and kicking accuracy. As a result, Cherry was named by Chicago Tribune sportswriter Walter Eckersall to the All-Western Conference first team at left end, making Cherry the first Buckeye ever chosen for the all-league roster in only the school's second season as a full-fledged member.

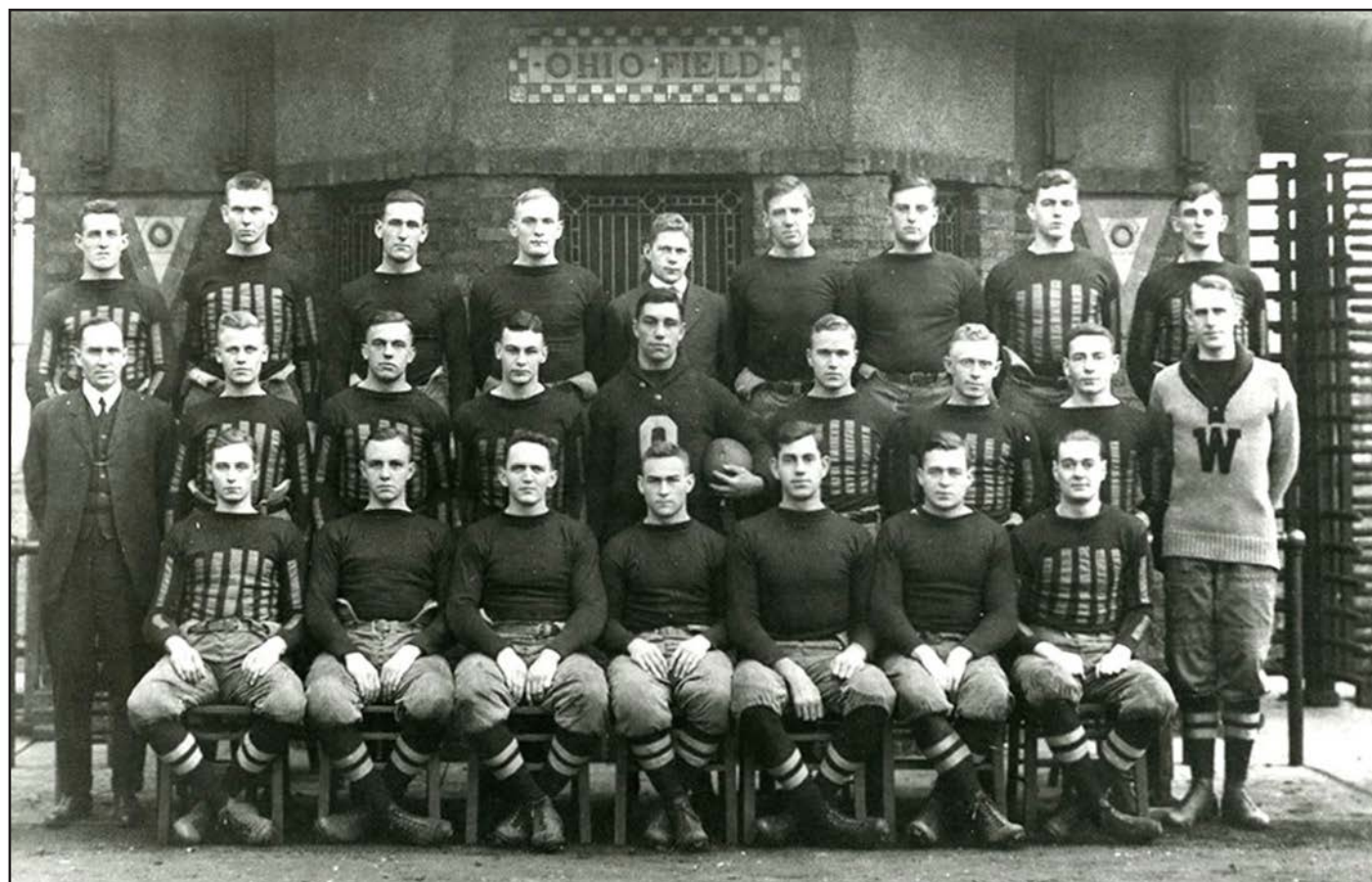
More accolades followed, including the ultimate honor – inclusion on Walter Camp's annual All-America list for the national publication *Collier's Weekly*.

Camp, who captained the Yale football team in the late 1870s and coached at his alma mater as well as Stanford, was a renowned sportswriter who is credited with developing many of the rules of American football. Since he was based in New Haven, Conn., Camp typically stocked his All-America rosters with players from Ivy League powers as well as other Eastern schools. But Cherry's reputation did enough to catch Camp's attention, and the sportswriter listed the senior end on his roster of players deserving of honorable mention.

Also that year, Cherry was given second-team All-America honors by the *International News Service*, the precursor of *United Press International*.

It was the culmination of a sterling college career for Boyd Vincent Cherry, born March 6, 1893, in Newark, Ohio, but who spent his formative years growing up on the south side of Chicago. His father, Charles Paige Cherry, was a vice president for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the oldest railroad in the United States as well as the country's first common carrier railroad.

Boyd lived with his father and mother, the former Laura Chenowith, along with younger sister Miriam in a two-story Victorian-style house on Eggleston Avenue. His first love was baseball since his home was located less



FILE PHOTO

A GOOD SEASON — The 1914 Ohio State team was 5-2 under coach John Wilce and featured the Buckeyes' first All-American, Boyd Cherry.

than five miles south of South Side Park, the Major League Baseball home of the Chicago White Sox.

Cherry became a multisport star at Hyde Park High School and was the same when he decided to return to his native state to attend college at Ohio State. Going by the nickname of "Bill," he competed four years for the Buckeyes in baseball, basketball and football, earning a total of nine varsity letters. He was also a member of Bucket and Dipper, the exclusive junior class honor society dedicated to scholarship, leadership and service.

He began his OSU football career in the fall of 1912 under head coach John R. Richards. At the time, the university football program had been in existence for more than 20 years but couldn't seem to hold the interest of any one head coach. None of the 10 men officially hired to pilot the program had stayed longer than four seasons, and none of the previous two had lasted more than one.

That somewhat alarming trend was supposed to end with "Big John" Richards. The University of Wisconsin graduate had seven years of coaching experience – far more than any of his predecessors – when he took the Ohio State job in the spring of 1912. As a result, Richards was also hired as the head track coach as well as to a newly-created position described as "chief administrator of the entire athletic program." It was the precursor to what is known today as the director of athletics.

Richards brought a hard-driving, no-nonsense approach with him to Columbus, personality traits that endeared him to some players but turned off others. "No program has a mortgage on good football no matter

what their past reputation," he once said. "It's the team that works hardest that wins."

The Buckeyes enjoyed some success that fall with a 6-3 record that included lopsided wins against Otterbein, Denison and Cincinnati as well as a league championship in their final season as members of the Ohio Athletic Conference. But their three losses came against stronger opponents – Penn State, Michigan and Michigan Agricultural College, which later became Michigan State.

The Penn State game was an especially black mark on the season. With the Buckeyes trailing 37-0 in the third quarter, Richards pulled his team from the field, charging the Nittany Lions with "excessively rough play." Fans streamed out of the stands to confront Penn State coaches and players, going so far as to take Penn State pennants and light them on fire. The incident caused extreme embarrassment for the university with one Ohio newspaper describing the scene as "about the worst streak of yellow witnessed on a gridiron this season."

When Richards was admonished by university officials for letting things get out of hand, the coach offered his resignation despite the fact there were two games remaining in the season. The resignation was not accepted, and Richards coached the final two games – a 36-6 win at Ohio Wesleyan and a 35-20 home loss to Michigan State on Thanksgiving Day.

The following day, Richards was on his way to Chicago, having accepted a job with the city's department of recreation.

Richards' departure elevated head basketball and baseball coach Lynn W. St. John to the athletic directorship, and the new AD's

first task was to find a new football coach. It seemed a simple task but turned out to be anything but.

St. John's first choice was Colorado College head coach Claude Rothgeb, who left the university hanging for a couple of weeks before deciding to stay in Colorado. Former University of Chicago standout John Schommer, a four-time basketball All-American and disciple of legendary head coach Amos Alonzo Stagg, was approached, but he couldn't come to financial terms with the university. Meanwhile, several football team members, including Cherry, contemplated giving up the sport to concentrate on their studies.

St. John finally settled on another former Wisconsin football star as his new coach, but in sharp contrast to Richards, John Wilce took a more cerebral approach to the game. He also provided stability for the program and enjoyed one of the longest tenures as head coach of the Buckeyes.

All-America Honors

Upon his arrival on campus, Wilce immediately summoned veteran players and told them his philosophy toward the game and what was expected of them. Cherry was impressed enough to return for his junior year in 1913 and helped OSU post a 4-2-1 record in its first season under the new head coach.

Cherry was then poised for a standout senior campaign the following year, but it nearly didn't happen.

On the Saturday before the 1914 season opener against Ohio Wesleyan, Cherry was injured during a full scrimmage against the OSU freshman squad at Ohio Field. The

team's medical staff at first believed the injury to be minor, but further examination revealed a fractured left cheekbone. Dr. Jack Means, the team's chief physician, estimated Cherry would be sidelined for at least three weeks.

The Buckeyes pressed on and claimed a 16-2 victory in the opener against Ohio Wesleyan, a 13th win against just two losses in the all-time series against the Battling Bishops. But Ohio State clearly missed its star player. With Cherry in the lineup, the Buckeyes had beaten Wesleyan the previous year by a 58-0 score and by a 36-6 margin the season before that.

A much tougher opponent loomed the following week in Case School of Applied science, a team the Buckeyes had beaten only twice in seven previous meetings. But thanks to some ingenuity from St. John, who was also an assistant football coach, Ohio State's chances against its in-state rival were enhanced.

The athletic director spent several evenings devising a special piece of headgear for Cherry to wear that protected his cheekbone. It was a kind of primitive shield, although face masks affixed to helmets did not become prevalent in football until the late 1940s and early 1950s.

With the protective gear firmly attached to his leather helmet, Cherry donned his jersey No. 13 for the Oct. 10 game in Cleveland and played a key role in helping the Buckeyes take a 7-6 victory against Case on a muddy field. Cherry caught several passes during the contest and also played stellar defense, prompting the team's next opponent to install several special plays to try to neutralize the OSU star.

Illinois had never lost to Ohio State in two previous meetings, and second-year head coach Robert Zuppke wanted it to stay that way. Newspaper accounts reported the Fighting Illini coach "has a wholesome respect for the ability of end Cherry to gain ground by the air route. He is taken so seriously that Zuppke has developed a special defense to take care of him – if possible."

Whatever precautions Zuppke took, they seemed to work. Although Cherry drew praise for his work on defense, especially for breaking up several Illinois passing attempts, the Illini shut down the Ohio State offense and secured a 37-0 win at old Illinois Field in Champaign.

Illinois would go on to post a perfect 7-0 season in 1914, outscoring its opposition by a 224-22 margin, winning the Western Conference title and sharing national championship honors with undefeated teams from Texas and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

The Buckeyes fell again the following week, missing an extra point and losing at home to Wisconsin by a 7-6 final score. But OSU rebounded with a 13-3 win the next week against Indiana at Washington Park in Indianapolis. It marked the program's first-ever conference victory on the road as well as its first win in seven tries against the Hoosiers. It was also the team's first out-of-state win since a 17-6 win late during the 1908 season at Vanderbilt.

Cherry played a big role in defeating the Hoosiers as Wilce successfully employed his passing game. The senior star opened the game with a 40-yard reception from quarterback Lou Pickerel that set up Ohio State's



FILE PHOTO

CHERRY ON TOP — Boyd Cherry overcame a fractured cheekbone to become Ohio State's first football All-American in 1914 by being stellar on offense and defense.

first touchdown. Then in the fourth quarter, Cherry's 22-yard catch gave the Buckeyes the ball on the Indiana 6-yard line. One play later, Pickerel found right end Dwight Ginn in the end zone for the game-clinching touchdown.

"In the final section of the game," the Ohio State Journal reported the following morning, "Indiana was swamped by the skillful forward passing system that the Ohio eleven brought into play."

After that game, there was no stopping the Buckeyes. They cruised to a 39-0 win against Oberlin and then dispatched Northwestern by a 27-0 score in the 1914 season finale to wind up with a 5-2 overall record. They also split their four conference games to finish in a fourth-place tie behind Illinois, Minnesota and Chicago in their first season of Western Conference play.

Cherry played extremely well down the stretch for Ohio State. After his big game against Indiana, he had an even bigger one against Oberlin, catching a number of passes, including one for a late touchdown. He was also stellar on defense and had a hand in blocking three Crimson and Gold punts.

When the season was over, the accolades began to pour in for Cherry. First, he was named to the first team of The Columbus Dispatch's All-Ohio Eleven. Joining him on that roster were four teammates – Charles Snyder at tackle, Arthur Kiefer at guard, Pickerel at quarterback and team captain Campbell "Honus" Graf at fullback.

Of the 11 first-team members on the Dispatch team, only Cherry and Denison half-back N.G. Rupp were unanimous choices.

In early December, Cherry was honored again when he was named one of the first-team ends on the All-Western Conference team. A week later, the Ohio State star was among those praised by Camp as he made his annual All-America selections.

"In the line," Camp wrote, "(Charles) Coolidge of Harvard, (George) Squier and (Perry) Graves of Illinois and Cherry of Ohio State, all ends, are especially worthy of men-

tion."

The recognition by Camp was noteworthy for an Ohio State player. Eight of the first-team members that year hailed from Ivy League schools, and only five of the 33 players named to the first three All-America teams were from schools west of New York. Because of Cherry's trailblazing efforts, Camp began to turn his attention to more Midwestern schools, and two years later, Harley became the first Ohio State player ever to attain first-team All-America mention.

By all accounts, Cherry took his accolades in stride. By the time he had earned the school's first All-America honors in football, he had already turned his attention to another sport.

Less than a week after the end of the season, he had turned in his spikes for sneakers

and was captaining Ohio State's basketball team for the 1914-15 season. Cherry joined football teammates Graf and Ernie Godfrey – who would later serve 33 years as an Ohio State assistant football coach – on that squad that finished with a 6-10 record under the guidance of St. John.

The same day he earned his All-America honors in football, Cherry contributed six points to a 30-19 basketball win against St. Mary's.

After receiving his bachelor of arts degree in the spring of 1915, Cherry took a job as a salesman with the fledgling Kinnear Manufacturing Co., which had been founded in 1896 by Columbus entrepreneurs William R. Kinnear and Edwin Gager. Kinnear is credited with inventing and then producing the first interlocking slat steel door, a feature seen today at nearly every loading dock and warehouse throughout the world.


In his spare time, Cherry continued to participate in sports, particularly community basketball leagues and semipro football. He even played on teams that included future College Football Hall of Fame coach Knute Rockne as well as the legendary Jim Thorpe.

Cherry married the former Helen Rhodes in 1917, a relationship that ended in divorce. But while on a business trip to New York City, where Kinnear maintained an office, he met the former Frances Halliday, a stage actress who had been one of the stars of a Broadway revival of the musical comedy "Floradora."

The couple carried on a long-distance relationship until they were married in Columbus in 1921.

Cherry continued to work for Kinnear Manufacturing, rising to a vice presidency with the company before his retirement in 1954. He and Frances retired to Fort Myers, Fla., and lived there until his death in 1970 at the age of 77.

Nearly a half-century later, Cherry was finally recognized by his alma mater with induction into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame. He was part of the 2019 class that included fellow football players Mike Nugent and A.J. Hawk as well as men's basketball coach Thad Matta and women's basketball coach Jim Foster.



**CATHOLIC
CEMETERIES**
of Columbus

A Sacred Trust since 1850

St. Joseph Cemetery Lockbourne
Resurrection Cemetery Lewis Center
Holy Cross Cemetery Pataskala
Mt. Calvary Cemetery Columbus

catholiccemeteriesofcolumbus.org

Assistant Frye Trying To Flip 2025 OL Ajidahun

While there have been a couple of big misses in the cycle on the offensive line, Ohio State offensive line coach Justin Frye is still trying to build out the 2025 class that already features Toledo Whitmer four-star offensive tackle Carter Lowe (6-5, 290), Upper Marlboro (Md.) Riverdale Baptist four-star interior offensive lineman Jayvon McFadden (6-5, 300) and Westerville (Ohio) North three-star interior offensive lineman Jake Cook (6-5, 295).

Ajidahun told 247Sports that he and his family were very excited when he was offered by Frye.

"He stopped at my school to watch practice and called me Thursday to offer me," Ajidahun said. "I was with family and friends. We were all excited knowing the kind of program Ohio State is. I love the culture and the NFL-style pro offense they run."

He has been committed to Georgia Tech since Aug. 3 – just nine days before another Ohio State offer in Roswell (Ga.) Fellowship Christian School four-star offensive tackle Josh Petty (6-5, 265) also committed to the Jackets – but also took official visits to Georgia and Ole Miss over the summer, so if he's opening his recruitment back up, the Buckeyes likely won't be the only other option. He already attended Georgia's 48-3 win over Tennessee Tech on Sept. 7.

His initial decision reportedly had something to do with Georgia Tech's academics being better than Georgia's so he isn't focused only on what the football program could do for him, but that would seemingly give the Buckeyes a leg up over the Bulldogs.

He has offers from 29 Division I schools, including Georgia, Ole Miss, Florida, Kansas State, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia, among others.

OSU Offers 2026 And 2027 OL

Back to Kolojay and Hiller, Frye's interest in the two linemen signals that the offensive

OSU Football 2025 Commitments						
Players in the class of 2025 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.						
Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School	
Tarvos Alford	LB	6-2	210	★★★★	Vero Beach, Fla.	
Phillip Bell	WR	6-2	195	★★★★	Mission Viejo, Calif.	
Jarquez Carter	DL	6-2	284	★★★★	Newberry, Fla.	
Jake Cook	OL	6-5	295	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) North	
Faheem Delane	SF	6-3	195	★★★★	Olney (Md.) Our Lady of Good Counsel	
Zion Grady	DE	6-4	235	★★★★	Enterprise, Ala.,	
Cody Haddad	SF	6-1	175	★★★★	Cleveland St. Ignatius	
Bo Jackson	RB	6-0	205	★★★★	Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph	
De'zie Jones	WR	6-0	180	★★★★	Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic	
Eli Lee	LB	6-3	230	★★★	Akron Hoban	
Brody Lennon	TE	6-4	220	★★★★	Gates Mills (Ohio) Gilmour Academy	
Carter Lowe	OT	6-5	290	★★★★	Toledo Whitmer	
Zahir Mathis	DL	6-6	225	★★★★	Philadelphia Imhotep Institute	
London Merritt	DL	6-3	250	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy	
Bodpegn Miller	WR	6-4	180	★★★	Mansfield (Ohio) Ontario	
Trajen Odom	DL	6-4	285	★★★★	Matthews, N.C.	
Na'eem Offord	CB	6-1	185	★★★★★	Birmingham (Ala.) Parker	
Riley Pettijohn	LB	6-1½	215	★★★★★	McKinney, Texas	
Quincy Porter	WR	6-3	190	★★★★	Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic	
Nate Roberts	TE	6-4	235	★★★★	Washington, Okla.,	
Maxwell Roy	DL	6-3	250	★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep	
Devin Sanchez	CB	6-2	170	★★★★★	Houston North Shore	
Tavien St. Clair	QB	6-4	225	★★★★★	Bellefontaine, Ohio	
DeShawn Stewart	SF	6-2	185	★★★★	Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic	
Isaiah West	RB	5-11	208	★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep	

line coach is also looking to fortify Ohio State's line classes of the future.

The two linemen both seem to have strong upsides as they go through their respective high school careers.

Kolojay is tabbed as the nation's 243rd-best prospect, 18th-best interior offensive lineman and 43rd-best player out of Florida in his class and has piqued the interest of several notable high-profile schools in recent months.

He currently has 30 offers from Division I schools, including Alabama, Auburn, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, LSU, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Oklahoma, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee and Texas, among others. According to 247Sports, the offensive tackle visited several of those schools this summer, including his hometown Colorado – he is a native of Denver – on June 1, Michigan on June 5, Georgia on June 20 and Tennessee on June 21.

Kolojay is the sixth interior offensive lineman Ohio State has offered in the 2026 class, a group that includes Richmond (Va.) St. Christopher's School four-star Darius Gray (6-3, 277) and Cleveland St. Ignatius four-star Will Conroy (6-3, 275).

Hiller is tabbed as the nation's 29th-best player, fourth-best offensive tackle and No. 1 player out of Pennsylvania in the 2027 class.

Despite being just a high school sophomore, Hiller has received some notable interest from Division I schools. He currently holds nine offers, eight of them from Power Four schools, including Maryland, Michigan, Oklahoma, Penn State, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, West Virginia and the Buckeyes. The only non-Power Four school to offer him so far is Kent State.

Hiller is the first offensive tackle Ohio State and Frye have offered in the 2027 recruiting cycle.

2025 LB Owusu-Boateng Down To Top Six

One recruit the Buckeyes have been go-

ing after for a while is Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star linebacker Nathaniel Owusu-Boateng (6-1, 205), who included Ohio State in his top six schools on Sept. 16.

Ohio State, Michigan, Notre Dame, Florida, Texas and USC were featured on his list. He hasn't decided when he is going to commit yet, but he did say that it will be coming soon.

Owusu-Boateng, the nation's 75th-best player and 10th-best linebacker in the 2025 class, did take an official visit to Columbus on June 14, one of eight he has taken this year since there are no longer limits on the number recruits can go on, and he told Eleven Warriors that he enjoyed his time on campus.

"This is one school that I can confidently say has the best traditions in college football," he said. "Coach (James) Laurinaitis was telling me that all All-Americans get their own tree, and I thought that was really cool because nobody else does that. There's a lot of other great traditions as well. I also loved how close everybody is. You don't see a player that's divided. Everybody's close and everybody is family. I loved that aspect."

At this point, he seems to be leaning toward Notre Dame and currently has visits scheduled this fall to get to USC and Texas, but he will likely try to schedule more before he makes his decision. Regardless, Owusu-Boateng doesn't seem to be trending toward choosing Ohio State, and it's likely that he chooses another program at this point.

2025 WR Myles Commits To USC

When Draper (Utah) Corner Canyon four-star wide receiver Jerome Myles (6-2, 210) announced that he would be pushing his commitment date up to Sept. 18, he also released his top three finalists, leaving Ohio State out. On that day, Myles committed to USC.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Greg Wilson

Along with offers to Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy 2026 four-star interior offensive lineman Breck Kolojay (6-6, 300) and Coatesville (Pa.) Area 2027 five-star offensive tackle Maxwell Hiller (6-5, 295) – who will be discussed later – Frye also sent an offer to current Georgia Tech commit Duluth, Ga., four-star offensive tackle Damola Ajidahun (6-6, 280) on Sept. 12 after stopping by his high school.

Ajidahun told 247Sports that the interest is mutual and that he will be taking a visit to Columbus this fall, likely for the game against Iowa on Oct. 5, but it will still be tough to pull the No. 230 player away from his commitment to the Yellow Jackets.

SHEETZ

FREAK OUT

4 FREEBIEZ!

SCAN TO DOWNLOAD THE APP!

WITH My Sheetz REWARDZ

DOWNLOAD THE APP & GET FREE OFFERZ & REWARDZ!

f t SHEETZ.COM @ d

OSU Football 2026 Commitment

Player(s) in the class of 2026 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Chris Henry Jr.	WR	6-5	205	★★★★★	Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei

Narrowing his list down to Texas A&M, USC and Utah before he committed, Myles left Ohio State and Georgia out of his top schools after the two were included in his top five.

Because he moved his decision date up from Oct. 30, it's no surprise that the Buckeyes and Bulldogs were out of consideration for the four-star, since the two schools were both in so late on the recruitment of the 2025 prospect, while the Aggies and Utes had been after him for months before.

However, the Trojans offered Myles just five days before the Buckeyes did and landed the wide receiver after he took an official visit to the L.A. Memorial Coliseum on Sept. 6, the weekend that USC beat Utah State 48-0.

Ohio State already has four receivers in the class, with Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic four-star Quincy Porter (6-3, 190); Mission Viejo, Calif., four-star Phillip Bell (6-2, 195); Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic four-star De'zie Jones (6-0, 180); and Ontario, Ohio, three-star Bodpegn Miller (6-4, 180) committed to the Buckeyes, but Myles would have been a solid addition had they been able to earn his commitment.

Should Ohio State look to add more to its wide receiver group in the 2025 cycle, it will likely be either a flip or a late offer to a senior during the high school season.

LB Davis Includes OSU In Top 12

Loganville (Ga.) Grayson four-star linebacker Anthony Davis (6-2, 200) released a top 12 list that included Ohio State. The Buckeyes joined Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Colorado, Michigan, Oklahoma, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee, Texas and USC in his top schools.

Davis, the No. 239 overall player in the 2026 class and the No. 21 linebacker, has already visited Columbus for the Buckeyes' spring game earlier this year, but he plans to get back on campus again for the Nov. 30 matchup against Michigan, a game that always is a popular destination for recruits when it is at Ohio Stadium.

"Man, Ohio State is different," Davis told Buckeye Huddle in May after his visit. "That was the best visit so far that I've had.

"I came to the spring game, it was 80,000 people at the spring game," Davis added. "That's crazy to me."

Davis told Buckeye Huddle that Laurinaitis – who was promoted to a full-time position over the offseason allowing him to go on recruiting visits – is a big reason Ohio State is one of his favorites at this point in the recruiting process.

"I talked to him a couple of times on the phone, but in person, the way he (works) with his linebackers, it's elite," Davis said.

"It really stood out to me the way he coaches them. I really love it. And he has former experience of playing in the NFL, so that's always good."

As BSB went to press, the Buckeyes' only commitment in the 2026 class is Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei five-star wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. (6-5, 205), but with football season in full force, recruiting in that cycle could begin to speed up moving forward.

2026 OT Cantwell Talks Recruitment

Ohio State is after another highly-rated 2026 offensive lineman, Nixa, Mo., five-star offensive tackle Jackson Cantwell (6-8, 300).

Cantwell, the No. 2 overall player in the 2026 class and the top-rated prospect at his position, talked to 247Sports about his recruitment and if he plans on scheduling visits this season.

"There are definitely some," he said. "I released a top 14, and I'm definitely focused in there. I could highlight any of them, but there are a few I know I'm going to visit. I visited Nebraska already. Missouri and Georgia are in there also. LSU, 'Bama, Oregon, I like all of those places. They each have individual stuff that makes them great. I know for Mizzou and Nebraska, proximity is definitely a big thing for me and the culture there.

"They want local guys to come in and lead them to where they were. For Mizzou, it's about establishing a legacy with in-state guys. For a school like Oregon, they are making a statement in the college football world. Oregon is a popular team, and that's

for good reason. They've got a young coaching staff, and they are doing a really good job.

"They've got some talent on their team and they are going to be good. Georgia, Alabama and LSU are three top-tier SEC programs. Those schools are pretty self-explanatory, but they have good coaching staffs, good leadership at the head coach, and they are pretty good every year."

Ohio State was in the top 14 that Cantwell released, but the rest of the schools are going to be tough ones to beat when it comes to getting him to commit. He has had some interest in other Big Ten schools like Oregon and Nebraska, visiting the Cornhuskers campus for their 28-10 win over Colorado on Sept. 7.

"I was having a lot of fun with it that day," he said. "I got to meet almost everybody at Nebraska. It was a really interesting experience for me. I was walking around talking to Will Compton and Taylor Lewan. I'd seen their podcast before. I took a picture with Will for a few seconds last year, but we talked a lot more this time and I enjoyed it a lot.

"Just getting to watch the game, the environment was crazy. They got after it and ran the football really well.

"They were definitely looking good out there."

Cantwell didn't say whether he plans to try to get to Columbus for a visit this season, but as a 2026 recruit, he won't sign anything until December 2025, so there is a lot of time for Frye and the Buckeyes to try to

Continued On Page 30

ROOSTERS CHARITABLE GOLF OUTING

THESE GENEROUS SPONSORS HAVE HELPED RAISE OVER \$40 MILLION FOR THE BUCKEYE CRUISE FOR CANCER AND THE OSUCC - JAMES CANCER HOSPITAL AND SOLOVE RESEARCH INSTITUTE.



GIVING BACK OVER \$1 MILLION

A YEAR TO LOCAL CHARITIES & ORGANIZATIONS



BENEFITTING



The James



- HANDGARD
- KEYBANK
- MERRILL LYNCH CLIPPERS
- CLOROX-HIDDEN VALLEY
- WOLVERINE PACKING
- HAMILTON COMMUNICATIONS
- GENPAK
- REDGOLD

- CORBEN
- MICELI
- MCCORMICK
- CAP CITY STAFFING
- NESTLE
- LAKE ERIE FROZEN FOODS
- INNOPAK
- ROCKY BOOTS
- BERRY GLOBAL

THANKS A MILLION

DL Pays His Own Way To See Ohio State

Continued From Page 29

make up ground.

Visitors Herded To OSU For Marshall Game

In the Buckeyes' last game of their three-game homestand to open the season, there were many recruits on campus to witness the 49-14 win over Marshall on Sept. 21. The following list of recruits was compiled using BSB's own information, reports from other outlets and recruits themselves.

Starting with committed prospects, Bellefontaine, Ohio, five-star quarterback Tavien St. Clair (6-4, 225) was on-site as he always is for home games along with Washington, Okla., four-star tight end Nate Roberts (6-4, 235) and Newberry, Fla., four-star defensive lineman Jarquez Carter (6-2, 284).

Carter is one of a few prospects who have been on flip watch for the Buckeyes since he visited home-state Florida for their end-of-July recruiting event and the Gators' home opener, a 41-17 loss to Miami (Fla.) on Aug. 31. With the Gators' season going poorly through the first four weeks, it might make it tougher to lure Carter away from the Buckeyes. It's also a good sign for Ohio

State that this visit to Columbus is unofficial, so it's on his own dime, showing he wants to be on campus.

As for uncommitted prospects, Warren (Ohio) Harding three-star athlete Chaz Coleman (6-5, 225) was on campus for a visit. He has yet to get an offer from the Buckeyes as BSB went to press, but they have been keeping a close eye on his senior high school season. He plays quarterback and linebacker for his prep team but projects to be a defensive end for Ohio State.

Currently, Coleman holds offers from Akron, Hampton, Illinois, Kentucky, Ole Miss, Penn State, Purdue, Virginia and Youngstown State.

The two younger brothers of former Michigan and current Alabama defensive back Keon Sabb were also in Columbus for the game. 2026 Glassboro, N.J. three-star athlete Amari Sabb (5-9, 155) and 2027 four-star athlete Xavier Sabb (6-1, 180), the No. 426 and No. 38 players in their respective classes, took in the win over the Thundering Herd. Both of the Sabb brothers walked away from Ohio State with an offer.

Cleveland Glenville four-star linebacker Cincere Johnson (6-3, 225), another 2026 prospect, was at the game as well, and he

walked away from the game with an offer from the Buckeyes. Johnson was at an Ohio State camp over the summer and has kept in touch with Ohio State coaches since then.

Other 2026 recruits on campus were Avon, Ohio, four-star athlete Jakob Weatherspoon (5-11, 172), Rochester (N.Y.) James Monroe three-star wide receiver Messiah Hampton (6-0, 170), Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange three-star quarterback Levi Davis (5-11, 183), Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy linebacker CJ Sanna (6-3, 225), Akron Hoban running back Anthony McMullen (5-11, 195) and Columbus Harvest Prep athlete Jamarcus Jones (6-0, 165).

Joining Xavier Sabb from the 2027 class was Harper Woods, Mich., five-star wide receiver Dakota Guerrant (6-1, 185) and Washington (D.C.) Spalding four-star wide receiver Myles McAfee, who also was offered by Ohio State over the weekend.

"I was surprised because I did not think (head coach Ryan Day) was going to offer me, but I am blessed and thankful," McAfee told 247Sports. "What impressed me was how good they put their wide receivers in places to win.

"He said keep up the good work and wanted me to come back up. I am really in-

terested in Ohio State, and I most likely will be back up there. It is just depending on my schedule."

Other Notes And Tidbits

- While Birmingham (Ala.) Parker five-star cornerback Na'eem Offord (6-1, 185) is on flip watch with Auburn and Oregon recruiting him hard, his counterpart, Houston North Shore five-star cornerback Devin Sanchez (6-2, 170), reaffirmed his commitment to the Buckeyes on Twitter on Sept. 20, saying he's "locked in" along with a picture of him with cornerbacks coach Tim Walton. Sanchez and Offord are the No. 1 and 3 corners in the class, respectively, and have been a very big part of what has been a No. 1 recruiting class to this point for Ohio State. Sanchez has not taken any visits to other schools and didn't seem to be planning to as BSB went to press, so it seems that he is serious about coming to Ohio State.

- 2026 Mineral (Va.) Louisa County five-star running back Savion Hiter (5-11, 182) has scheduled a visit to Ohio State for the matchup on Nov. 9 against Purdue. He is currently the No. 1 running back recruit in his class and the No. 29 overall player ac-

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago — 1989

Ohio State fans might have thought the Buckeyes would shy away from recruiting defensive backs this season. After all, head coach John Cooper and staff recruited four outstanding prospects the previous year in Foster Paulk, Chico Nelson, Tim Walton and Darrell Lewis.

However, while those players all settled into the Buckeye defensive scheme, two longtime members of the Ohio State secondary would graduate after the 1989 season.

Replacements would be needed for strong safety Zack Dumas and cornerback David Brown, while Vinnie Clark, Jim Peel and Mark Pelini would be gone after the 1990 season.

Topping the list of outstanding high school defensive back prospects in Ohio were Jeff Cothran of Middletown, Gerald Simpson of Warren Harding, Delandual Conwell of Ironton and Rod Boykin of Dayton Meadowdale.

All four prospects were excellent athletes who could play a variety of positions in college.

30 Years Ago — 1994

Ohio State might have gotten a second chance at recruiting Curtis Enis, the previous year's Mr. Football in Ohio.

The 6-2, 230-pound running back/linebacker from Mississinawa Valley in Union City, Ohio, signed with Penn State without ever visiting OSU. But when Enis failed to achieve Proposition 48 requirements and the Nittany Lions suggested that he enroll in a prep school rather than at PSU, his national letter of intent was voided.

He was reportedly strongly considering switching to Ohio State. Expected to attend Kiski Prep School in Saltsburg, Pa., in the fall, Enis got together with several other Ohio State recruits in the summer as they played in the Big 33 all-star game and whipped a team of Pennsylvania stars 35-20.

Enis visited Ohio State's preseason camp on Aug. 18, talking to freshmen Orlando Pace and Eric Gohlstein and then touring the facilities with Larry Petroff, the assistant to the director for football operations. As he left practice, Enis said, "It looks good for me here."

25 Years Ago — 1999

Westerville (Ohio) South running back Branden Joe became OSU's 12th commitment for the class of 2000 when he committed on Sept. 16.

Joe (6-2, 230) was off to a big start for his senior year, rushing for 840 yards (8.1 average) and scoring eight touchdowns in helping his team to a 4-0 start. Joe celebrated his announcement a day later by rushing for 237 yards and two touchdowns in a 28-20 win over Gahanna.

He picked Ohio State over Michigan, Purdue, Notre Dame and Penn State.

"I had been weighing my options," Joe told BSB. "I sat down with my family, and we had a nice long talk. I just decided this was the best decision for me.

"I just don't think I can find any better atmosphere in the country. This is what I want to be a part of."

20 Years Ago — 2004

Chagrin Falls, Ohio, wide receiver Brian Robiskie had narrowed his choice of colleges down to three, and Ohio State made the final cut.

"I'm definitely starting to narrow my list a little bit," Robiskie told BuckeyeSports.com recruiting analyst Bill Kurelic on Sept. 12. "I have an offer from Miami of Florida, and I like Ohio State and USC. Those are probably my top three right now."

Robiskie also had offers from Penn State, Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana and said he was beginning the process of scheduling his official visits.

"It could be more beneficial to take some during the season and see a game," he said. "But it could be better after the season when coaches have more time to talk to you."

The 6-3, 190-pounder caught 50 passes and scored 13 touchdowns as a junior. Through the first two games of the 2004 season, he already had 12 catches and three touchdowns.

15 Years Ago — 2009

Ohio State fans who followed recruiting knew that Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne junior quarterback Braxton Miller had been dubbed the quarterback of the future for the Buckeyes — once he committed to the program, that is.

In town for an unofficial visit for the USC game, the 6-1, 174-pound quarterback said the game stood out when compared to others he had attended in Ohio Stadium.

"This time it was a whole different type of feeling as everyone was standing up and no one was sitting down," he said of what proved to be an 18-15 Trojan victory. "Everyone was into the game, and it was neat to be a part of it."

Miller said he paid particular attention to the play of OSU quarterback Terrelle Pryor.

"Terrelle is a great athlete, and I can see he's worked on his throwing ability," Miller said. "He's getting some good coaching from Coach (Nick) Siciliano. The thing I see he needs to keep working on right now is for him to stay in the pocket and not let the defensive ends get him off track."

10 Years Ago — 2014

After going more than a month without a verbal commitment, Ohio State tacked on another pledge to its class of 2015 when three-star wide receiver A.J. Alexander gave his verbal commitment to the Buckeyes on Sept. 12.

The Burke (Va.) Lake Braddock prospect chose Ohio State

over Wisconsin.

"Alexander is a big, strong, physical receiver," said Scout.com recruiting analyst Michael Clark, who covered the Virginia and Carolinas area. "He runs good routes and does a nice job of using his body to get open. He has the ability to make the tough catch across the middle or downfield. When the ball is in the air, Alexander shows great concentration and ball skills. He does a nice job of catching the ball with his hands and is very tough to bring down after the catch. Alexander is also extremely dangerous in the red zone."

Five Years Ago — 2019

Ohio State's coaching staff was not permitted to contact prospects from the 2021 recruiting class until Sept. 8 — one week after the rest of the country could reach out to the nation's top-ranked juniors — after self-reporting two minor recruiting infractions the month before.

Those violations involved on-campus photo shoots and the use of prospects' names in a visit itinerary.

As soon as the clock hit 12:01 a.m., though, the Buckeye coaching staff did its best to make up ground on the recruiting trail. Monroeville (Pa.) Gateway four-star safety Derrick Davis (6-1, 194), Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic four-star defensive tackle Tywone Malone (6-4, 305) and Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal four-star offensive tackle Donovan Jackson (6-5, 308) were among the prospects to hear from Ohio State that evening.

There were still a number of top targets whom the Buckeyes were not allowed to contact until Sept. 15. The reason for the delay had not been reported.

One Year Ago — 2023

Ohio State picked up a bit of a surprise commitment on Sept. 15 when Stafford (Va.) Mountain View three-star defensive end Eric Mensah (6-3, 290) announced he was flipping his pledge from Virginia Tech to the Buckeyes.

Mensah was the No. 802 overall prospect and the No. 53 defensive lineman in 2024, and he had been committed to the Hokies since July. He took an official visit to Ohio State for the team's 35-7 win over Youngstown State, a trip during which he decided that Columbus would be the right move for him going forward.

"I feel relieved," he told 247Sports. "I was with Hero (Kanu) walking from one of the dorms, and he was just telling me about Ohio State. Some of the things he was telling me, I was like, 'Wow.' And just walking around a big community environment, it felt so good."

"Some of the things he was telling, especially when I asked him serious questions, more in-depth questions, and the way he was answering them was really good, and the game environment was good, too."

ASK AN ANALYST

with Bill Greene of Buckeye Scoop

Nixa, Mo., five-star offensive tackle Jackson Cantwell (6-8, 300) has already made a couple of visits this year and is still in the process of trying to narrow down his top 14. What do you make of him as a prospect, and what do you think of Ohio State's chances with him?

"Your guess is as good as mine on that one. I always went by 'watch what they do and not what they say.' Even using that logic, I don't know. When you have a top 14, recruiting is not at the forefront, or you're lying. One or the other. There's no such thing as a top 14, so I don't know what to say in terms of recruiting. Let's see where it goes. As a prospect, I think he's special. I think he's really good. I would fight hard for him. I can see why he's got all the offers he's gotten, and you play it out. You try to get him on campus as much as you can. You try to work the name, image and likeness angle, and God bless you. He's going to sign with someone someday."

New Orleans Edna Karr five-star defensive lineman Jahkeem Stewart (6-6, 270) is taking the steps to reclassify to 2025, and he said that a commitment could come in the middle of the season. He has also said that he wants to visit Ohio State for the Michigan game this year. Do you think the Buckeyes still have a chance?

"Yes, absolutely I do. He was there for camp in June. He looked like a million dollars. He looked like an NFL guy at the time. I'm normally not a fan of reclassifying. I hate it. But in his case he looked like a man, and the relationship and the rapport with Ohio State defensive line coach Larry Johnson, and we're 50 yards away from the action, it looked like he really had a great rapport there. So when you look at Larry Johnson's history of putting dudes in the NFL, I definitely think Ohio State has a shot there."

"As a prospect, he's amazing. I was against the Sonny Styles reclassification. I hate it as a rule. I really think kids should develop correctly. There's no need to rush it, but in his case, it wouldn't bother me. I would take him in a minute. Mentally, I don't know where he is, but physically, he looks like an NFL player. I didn't see where he needed a lot of physical development. So I'd kill to get that guy, to be honest with you. If somebody wanted to tell me he's reclassifying as the No. 1 player in the country, I'm not going to argue with you."

There have been talks that Ohio State is trying to flip Alabama commits Mobile (Ala.) Theodore four-star offen-

sive tackle Micah DeBose (6-5, 315) and Cincinnati Winton Woods four-star defensive end Justin Hill (6-3, 220), Pickerington (Ohio) North three-star wide receiver and Kentucky commit Preston Bowman (6-0, 190), and a few more. Are there any recruits you think fans should keep an eye on that you think OSU has the best chance to flip?

"No, not right now. I get why they're after DeBose. That one makes a ton of sense. I don't have a lot of positivity or confidence there that they're going to be able to do that. We'll see. There's a long way to go until signing day. The same with Justin Hill. I haven't heard anything there that makes me think they're going to flip him. Preston Bowman is a surprise to me. When they got Mission Viejo, Calif., four-star wide receiver Phillip Bell (6-2, 195), I thought that would be the end of the Preston Bowman thing. Ohio State wide receivers coach Brian Hartline knows 500,000 times more than I know. But to me, I don't get that one. I kind of like where they're at wide receiver-wise, so I don't know. It would be hard for me to believe that if they went after him with both barrels, that they couldn't flip him. It's hard to believe he would stay committed with the chance to come to Ohio State. But how hot and heavy are they after him right now? I don't know that."

While it's not a sure thing, Birmingham (Ala.) Parker five-star cornerback Na'eem Offord (6-1, 185) seems to be the most likely to flip away from Ohio State, but are there any other current commits the Buckeyes will need to keep a close eye on?

"Vero Beach (Fla.) four-star linebacker Tarnos Alford (6-2, 210) – to me, he's had that ... I always like to refer to it as the wandering eye. Alford and Offord, those two dudes have the wandering eye right now, and you just don't know. We're in the NIL era. If you take the money out of it – it was so much easier in the old days you could almost use logic and common sense and kind of figure out that there's not going to be a defensive back decommit from Ohio State and cornerbacks coach Tim Walton to go to a dumpster fire like Auburn. That just couldn't happen. It can happen today. I mean, the money is real, and when kids are being paid like third-round draft picks in the NFL, it changes things. Florida State pays too, and it's closer to home (for Alford). And there's a misconception on our message board, they're like, 'Florida State stinks this year, he's not going to go there.' I'm like, 'No, that makes it more appealing.'

"That puts him on the field quickly, and they can sell him on early playing time. You'll be three-and-out, and you'll be in the 2027 draft. Fans kind of mistake the win-loss record for he's not going to want to go there. Well, no, because it's still Florida State. They may have a terrible year this year. They're not going to stay terrible. They're Florida State, and they can promise him, 'Dude, we need you, and that's why we're not playing well. We need you in the middle.'

"So that is not a detriment to me. But those two are the ones that, just because they're showing themselves. It's not anything I've heard, any inside information. If you're still taking visits and you're still talking to other schools, then you're on my list to jump, and especially with the money that's out there right now. What is TJ Alford worth to Ohio State in terms of NIL, vs. what is he worth to Florida State? What is Offord worth to Auburn right now? He might be No. 1 on their board in terms of NIL, so do you compete with that? It's just the NIL piece has just changed everything in recruiting, obviously. That's not an earth-shattering statement, but it sure makes it tough when you're trying to predict what you think is going to happen."

Now that the high school season is well under way, have you seen or heard about any 2025 prospects who might get a late offer from Ohio State?

"If you look at each position group where they're at, you can almost draw a line through most of them. Well, you look at the offensive line, they're not close to being done. So I could see late offers going in state to maybe Massillon (Ohio) Washington three-star offensive tackle and Wisconsin commit Nolan Davenport (6-6, 260), the Dayton Trotwood-Madison three-star offensive tackle and Kentucky commit Jermiel Atkins (6-8, 290).

"I would look at O-line. At O-line they don't have enough. They need two more, at least. So I could see late offers going there right off the bat. Then how do they feel about their running back situation? Do they need a third? Do they need to bring in a portal guy, or would they bring in another guy in this class? I don't have that answer, but I could see them maybe feeling like running back might be a little thin there with Henderson gone – Judkins will be gone next year too – so I could see that."

cording to 247Sports composite rankings. He recently released a top five that included Ohio State along with Michigan, Penn State, Tennessee and Georgia. He also will be visiting Virginia Tech, the Volunteers, the Wolverines and the Nittany Lions in the fall.

• Toledo Central Catholic four-star cornerback Victor Singleton (6-0, 160), a 2026 prospect, put the Buckeyes in his top 10

along with Michigan, Oregon, Nebraska, Penn State, Tennessee, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kentucky and Texas A&M. He is the No. 76 player in the class and the No. 7 cornerback and has been to Columbus multiple times this year, also visiting for a recruiting camp in June where he picked up his offer and getting to campus for the season opener on Aug. 31 for the 52-6 win over Akron.

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.

BUCKEYE GAMEDAY Memories: A new book of short stories about humorous gameday experiences in the 1960s through the 2010s by Tim Sullivan. Available on Amazon.com.

FOR SALE: OSU football programs including bowl games, national playoff and championship games. OSU basketball programs, NFL programs, golf, Olympics, NBA, other print sports memorabilia. Call John at (330) 507-7339.

TIM POND, member of both the Bishop Watterson High School and the Otterbein

University Basketball Halls of Fame, recently offered his publication entitled "Coaching Youth Basketball: Coaching the Coaches" for sale on Amazon.com. Access to this instructional manual was previously limited to attendees of his basketball clinics and camps only.

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.

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-Thursday
11 AM - 10 PM

Friday-Saturday
11 AM - 11 PM

Sunday
Noon - 10 PM

741 N. High St
In the Short North
614-298-1014

Monday - Saturday
11:30 AM - 1:30 AM

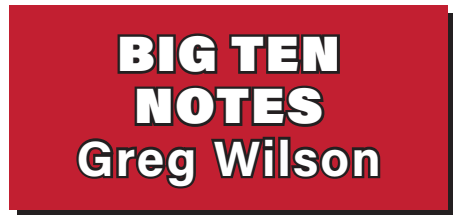
Sunday
Noon - 1:30 AM

KITCHEN UNTIL 1 AM DAILY

presscolumbus.com

Wolverines, Moore Reach Official Deal

It was announced on Sept. 11 that Michigan's head coach Sherrone Moore has officially reached an agreement on his deal with the university after he had been coaching the team for the first two games without a formal contract.



"We are excited to announce that the full contract for University of Michigan football coach Sherrone Moore has been signed by all parties," Michigan president Santa Ono and athletics director Warde Manuel said in a joint statement. "He is a proven leader and has been a great ambassador during his seven-plus years representing Michigan.

"Our university and athletic department leadership is behind Coach Moore, his coaching staff and the great student-athletes that compete on the field and in the classroom."

Moore had originally signed a five-year, \$30 million memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Jan. 26, 2024, that expired 90 days later. Manuel appeared on the "Conquering Heroes" podcast to say that he was working on finalizing the contract, and now an official agreement has been reached.

"Our University of Michigan administration led by president Santa Ono and athletic director Warde Manuel has been tremendous throughout this process, and I am excited to have this full contract completed," Moore said. "Their support for our team is greatly appreciated and all three of us are aligned in our goals for this football program. We want the attention to be on the players that work so hard to represent this

team and university at the highest level. All of my focus is and always will be centered on the mental, physical and spiritual development of the young men that suit up to play for Michigan."

Michigan (3-1) is ranked No. 12 in the country after suffering a blowout 31-12 loss to now-No. 1 Texas, beating Arkansas State 28-18 on Sept. 14 then winning over No. 13 USC 27-24 on Sept. 21.

Moore and the Michigan football program are still in the midst of the blowback from their sign-stealing scandal, for which they received a Notice of Allegations in August. Moore is facing a Level 2 violation for deleting a text thread of 52 messages with Connor Stalions – the former Wolverine recruiting analyst who was allegedly at the head of the scandal. Moore was also charged with a Level 2 violation for his involvement in Michigan's impermissible recruiting during a COVID-19 dead period, so he could be considered a repeat violator.

The program has 90 days from Aug. 26 to respond to the NOA before the matter moves on to a hearing in front of the NCAA's committee on infractions, but they could still come to a negotiated resolution before then.

Moore could be facing a suspension, which would make it the second straight year a Michigan head coach would be forced to miss games after former head coach Jim Harbaugh – who left the program in the off-season to become the head coach of the Los Angeles Chargers – was suspended for two separate three-game stints last season.

The first of the two was self-imposed by the university for the COVID-19 recruiting violations for the first three games of the regular season, and the second of the two was for the sign-stealing scandal during the final three games of the season, including the Wolverines' third straight win over Ohio State.

Due to this continued investigation into the program's impermissible sign stealing, Moore's new contract includes a protection that prevents him from being fired for cause for committing NCAA violations that occurred before the contract took effect.

The contract states that a violation of NCAA rules that occurred before the deal was agreed upon would not be grounds for termination for cause as long as the university had "actual knowledge of the facts or alleged facts that are the basis for the violation prior to the execution of this agreement by all parties."

Former U-M Players Sue NCAA, BTN

Four former Michigan football players, including former quarterback Denard Robinson and wide receiver Braylon Edwards, filed a class action lawsuit against the NCAA and Big Ten Network seeking more than \$50 million for being "wrongfully and unlawfully denied" the opportunity to earn money off their name, image and likeness, as reported by ESPN on Sept. 10.

The opportunity for athletes to profit off NIL has been available only since 2021, while Robinson played at Michigan from 2009-12 and Edwards was with the Wolverines from 2001-04.

The lawsuit says that the NCAA and Big

Ten Network "have systematically exploited these iconic moments" that the players took part in during their college football careers. The lawsuit is on behalf of those who played for Michigan before 2016.

Most recently in NIL-related lawsuits, the NCAA, its power conferences and attorneys who represented Division I athletes came to an agreement that settled three major antitrust lawsuits that threatened to upend the business model of college sports, with the defendants agreeing to pay roughly \$2.7 billion in damages to student-athletes.

Any Division I athlete who played a sport from 2016 to the present day is eligible for past damages, with the 2016 cutoff coming from the statute of limitations on the initial House v. NCAA lawsuit filed in 2020.

"The NCAA knew for decades that preventing players from monetizing the one thing of value they have – their name – was wrong and unlawful," said Jim Acho, the plaintiffs' attorney. "Today they recognize that players should have that right. But what about all the past players who were unlawfully denied that right? The money made off those players' backs was in the hundreds of millions. ... The players never saw a dime. ... We are here to right that wrong."

Former Michigan defensive end Mike Martin (2008-11) and linebacker Shawn Crable (2005-07) were the two other former Wolverines to join Edwards and Robinson in the lawsuit against the NCAA and Big Ten Network.

Robinson (2009-12) was the Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year in 2010, while Edwards (2001-04) earned the same honor along with the Biletnikoff Award, given to the nation's top wide receiver, in 2004.

Moore Names Orji Starter Over Warren

After the uninspiring 28-18 win over Arkansas State on Sept. 14, Moore announced the expected move that Davis Warren would no longer be the Wolverines' starter going forward, with Alex Orji taking his place beginning with the Sept. 21 27-24 win over USC.

In USC's welcome to the Big Ten, Orji was 7 of 12 throwing the ball for just 32 yards with no touchdowns.

Orji came into the game in the third quarter against the Red Wolves after Warren threw his third interception of the game. Warren finished 11 of 14 for 122 yards and no touchdowns. In three games as the Wolverines starter, he was a total of 48 for 72 with 444 yards and two touchdowns to six interceptions.

After entering the game, Orji led a scoring drive in the fourth quarter that ended in a 9-yard touchdown pass to tight end Hogan Hansen to extend the lead to 28-3. Orji was originally viewed as the favorite to win the starting job at the beginning of the season to replace J.J. McCarthy – who is now a Minnesota Viking and is missing his first pro season after tearing his meniscus – but Warren was reportedly more consistent in the passing game, which gave him the edge.

Before the move was officially made, Orji had thrown just six passes for 15 yards but had completed two of them for scores. Michigan's offense was 121st in the country

BIG

2024 Standings

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Illinois	1	0	1.000	4	0	1.000
Indiana	1	0	1.000	4	0	1.000
Iowa	1	0	1.000	3	1	0.750
Michigan	1	0	1.000	3	1	0.750
Michigan State	1	0	1.000	3	1	0.750
Washington	1	0	1.000	3	1	0.750
Maryland	0	1	0.000	3	1	0.750
Nebraska	0	1	0.000	3	1	0.750
USC	0	1	0.000	2	1	0.667
Minnesota	0	1	0.000	2	2	0.500
Northwestern	0	1	0.000	2	2	0.500
UCLA	0	1	0.000	1	2	0.333
Ohio State	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Oregon	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Penn State	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Rutgers	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Wisconsin	0	0	0.000	2	1	0.667
Purdue	0	0	0.000	1	2	0.333

Sept. 14 Games

Alabama 42, Wisconsin 10
 Michigan 28, Arkansas State 18
 Illinois 30, Central Michigan 9
 Michigan State 40, Prairie View 0
 Washington State 24, Washington 19
 Oregon 49, Oregon State 14
 Notre Dame 66, Purdue 7
 Minnesota 27, Nevada 0
 Iowa 38, Troy 21
 Indiana 42, UCLA 13
 Northwestern 31, Eastern Illinois 7
 Nebraska 34, UNI 3
 Maryland 27, Virginia 13

Sept. 20 Game

Illinois 31, Nebraska 24

Sept. 21 Games

Indiana 52, Charlotte 14
Ohio State 49, Marshall 14
 Maryland 38, Villanova 20
 Rutgers 26, Virginia Tech 23
 Penn State 56, Kent State 0
 Boston College 23, Michigan State 19
 LSU 34, UCLA 17
 Iowa 31, Minnesota 14
 Washington 24, Northwestern 5
 Michigan 27, USC 24
 Oregon State 38, Purdue 21

Sept. 27 Game

Washington at Rutgers, 8 p.m.

Sept. 28 Games

Illinois at Penn State, TBA
 Minnesota at Michigan, TBA
 Oregon at UCA, TBA
 Wisconsin at USC, TBA
 Nebraska at Purdue, noon
 Maryland at Indiana, noon
Ohio State at Michigan State, 7 p.m.

All times Eastern

in passing offense at 153.0 yards per game.

Orji had been used as an effective running threat with 10 rushes for 58 yards, and that continued against the Trojans with 13 attempts for 43 yards.

MSU Withheld Nassar Records

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel held a press conference on Sept. 11 to an-

nounce that she is closing her office's investigation into Larry Nassar's sexual assaults connected to Michigan State University after reviewing more than 6,000 documents linked to the scandal that the university refused to release, claiming attorney-client privilege. She said she plans to release the documents to the public with redactions, which she did – to the media – later that same day.

"Unfortunately, from the remaining documents, we have learned not all of the communications were preserved and that the university wrongly applied attorney-client privilege to many, if not most, of the remaining documents," Nessel said. "A significant number of the documents did not appear to be covered by privilege at all, which raised questions as to why MSU withheld these documents for so long."

Michigan State spokesperson Emily Guerrant said in a statement that she respects the efforts that Nessel made to investigate the scandal, noting that the university "fully complies with the attorney general's office and has provided more than 100,000 documents related to facts surrounding the entirety of the case."

"The university maintains that our interpretation and application of the attorney-client privilege was appropriate, as determined by East Lansing District Court Judge Richard Ball in 2019," Guerrant said. "Since 2016, the university has taken significant steps to improve campus safety and culture through robust prevention, support and response efforts."

"We are working to become a more ac-

countable organization each day, guided by an unwavering commitment to providing a safe campus and equitable environment for all."

Nessel said that she expected to find incriminating evidence in the documents since the university was so insistent about not releasing them, but there was none, which she was surprised to find.

"We found things that were embarrassing to the university, but we didn't find anything incriminating," Nessel said.

"Unfortunately, Michigan State University once again has shown it was never interested in helping the survivors of Larry Nassar to heal," said Valerie von Frank, founder of POSSE, a parent group of the survivors. "The AG concluded that the mystery of who knew what and when at MSU in the Nassar case will likely never be known, because not only were the documents unrevealing, but many, in the AG's opinion, did not meet the standard for attorney-client privilege."

Amanda Thomashow, who filed the original Title IX complaint against Nassar in 2014, said that after this long process, she is ready to move on and isn't surprised to see that Michigan State hid documents.

"MSU definitely has had so many opportunities to show us that they wanted to take real accountability and assure us that something like this would not happen on campus again," Thomashow said. "Unfortunately, they didn't really take those opportunities and chose to prolong our pain, kind of unnecessarily."

Wisconsin QB Van Dyke To Miss Rest Of Season

Luke Fickell's Wisconsin team suffered a major loss when starting quarterback Tyler Van Dyke went down with a torn ACL in the Badgers' first offensive series of the game in the 42-10 loss to No. 4 Alabama on Sept. 14.

Van Dyke was scrambling to the right on a third-and-7 trying to run for a first down and was brought down from behind on the Wisconsin sideline. While the Badgers did end up with the first down due to a defensive holding call, they were without their quarterback for the rest of the game and would later find out that it would be a season-long absence.

The loss of their starting quarterback was the first of many things that went wrong for the Badgers in the game, though the rest were issues that could be forgotten after the game.

"I'll give you guys the same message I just gave the team," Fickell said to the media after the loss. "If you haven't had your ass whooped before, you just did. It hurts, and it's not easy, but in this game that's going to happen. It's a part of the game. It stinks. It doesn't mean we didn't work hard."

Van Dyke didn't get much time to make an impact on the game, but when he was in he completed 5 of 5 passes for 16 yards. Before Fickell found out the extent of his injury, he knew the news wasn't likely going to be good, but he was happy with how Van Dyke looked in this game and the two games he played in to begin the season.

"I think he was really well prepared, and I think he had grown through those first few weeks," Fickell said. "He was really sharp to start that game."

Van Dyke returned to the sideline on crutches for the second half to watch red-shirt sophomore Braedyn Locke finish the game against the Crimson Tide. Locke ended up completing half of his passes (13 of 26) for 125 yards and a touchdown.

"You never hope for an injury. That's obvious," Locke said of Van Dyke after the loss to the Tide. "He's been a tremendous guy for our team, just a leader and a great player. He does things the right way, and I have a lot of respect for him. We have a good relationship so no part of you ever hopes for that, but the second your number is called you've got to be ready to go."

After the loss, Locke – who will likely remain the Badgers' quarterback in Van Dyke's spot moving forward over freshmen Mabrey Mettauer and Milos Spasojevic and sophomore redshirt freshman Cole LaCruce – had an extra week to prepare for their next game since they were off in Week 4. Their next game will be another big test, going on the road to play No. 13 USC on Sept. 28.

"We've got the utmost confidence in Braedyn," Fickell said. "It had been a battle all through fall camp and even in spring football. And Braedyn can execute this offense and do some things even different than Tyler can."

Spoil yourself before and after the game!

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

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Columbus - Polaris Parkway
8670 Orion Place, Columbus, OH 43240 • 614-781-6100

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

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

OSU To Defend Title With Blue-Collar Attitude

By **BOBBY GORBETT**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State's journey last season to its second national championship under head coach Nadine Muzerall started where the previous season's journey ended. Suffering a heartbreaking 1-0 defeat to rival Wisconsin in the 2023 national championship, Muzerall and the Buckeyes had to settle for the silver trophy instead of the gold they had won in 2022.

Muzerall didn't shy away from the team's shortcomings on the biggest stage of the 2022-23 season, making the decision to put the silver trophy at center ice for the entire team to see during their first practice to begin last year. That trophy would remain in the Buckeyes' locker room the rest of the year to serve as a reminder that they had come up short.

Muzerall's symbolic message played a part in fueling a relentless mentality, driving the team to flip the script on the heartbreaking loss they had suffered the year prior, to defeat Wisconsin 1-0 in the national championship game on March 24.

The 2023-24 season marked the Buckeyes' third straight national championship appearance and second win in three years, and it cemented the program as the women's hockey powerhouse Muzerall dreamt of putting together when she originally took the job in 2016.

The sustained success of the Buck-

eyes over the last five years has come with the perks of playing at Wrigley Field, the home of MLB's Chicago Cubs, against the Badgers on Jan. 4 this season along with a No. 2 preseason ranking in the WCHA coaches' poll and – Muzerall hopes – a new hockey rink in the works.

"I think it also would make recruiting a little easier," Muzerall said of a potential new rink on Sept. 17. "Our recruiting is fine, but I just think it shows our support of our game in the city of Columbus and at Ohio State. I think it can really grow hockey immensely in the state of Ohio."

The glamour of a potential dynasty being in the works is not just a far cry from the history of mediocrity within the program before Muzerall arrived but something that places a bull's-eye squarely on the back of the program as others try to take them down.

"I always thought of it like in NASCAR, the lead driver, everyone is drafting off of you, so it's a lot harder to stay in the front," Muzerall said.

Having won the national championship in 2023-24, the Buckeyes won't have a silver trophy to put at the center of the ice to motivate the team, and with as much talent as the Buckeyes have, it could be easy to see how the team wouldn't have as much urgency to push itself. However, Muzerall is determined to keep the hard-working approach that laid the foundation for the team's success.

"I don't want to lose who we were – that blue-collar team – because we have talent. If we have both, now we've become very dangerous," Muzerall said. "So I think that sets us aside from most people."

When Muzerall arrived in the program, Ohio State had never been to the national tournament and had only one appearance in the WCHA conference championship game, which it lost to Minnesota Duluth in the 2000-01 season. That's part of why it should come as no surprise that Muzerall felt as though she had plenty of work to do early in her tenure as the leader of the program.

"It was very early that I found some of the weaknesses within the program of accountability," Muzerall said. "I was raised by a single mom, didn't have a license, used to go to hockey on the back of her bicycle. We didn't have a car, so I was blue-collar. I had the Rocky mentality. I knew every kid could possess that, but did they want to possess it? I was after them hard early, and I set a tone early. We had to weed out some weak, and the strong survived."

According to Muzerall, the imprint she had made on the culture of the program really became noticeable during her second year when she banned alcohol from the team. She noticed that everyone liked to party and said to her players that they weren't good enough to do that and play hockey at the same time. When five players broke her ban on alcohol, it was not the coach but the captains on the team who rallied together to discipline the players who had broken the rule. The captains woke the team up at 5:30 a.m. to have the rulebreakers run stairs.

"That's when I knew the culture was starting to shape because I didn't have to do it anymore," Muzerall said. "I didn't have to enforce the rules; the team did, and that year we went to the Frozen Four."

Two national championships and two conference championships later, the

Buckeyes haven't looked back, but just like every other year, the 2024-25 team still has a few question marks.

The Buckeyes' main departures start with their two leading point scorers from last season. First-team All-WCHA forward Hannah Bilka made quite the impact with the Buckeyes in her one year with the team after transferring from Boston College with 48 points on 26 assists and 22 goals.

Former team captain and three-time All-WCHA forward Jennifer Gardiner also won't return to the ice this year after being tied with a team-high 27 assists and 18 goals (third) in the 2023-24 season.

As significant as any of the other departures is that of goalkeeper Raygan Kirk. She became a standout for the Buckeyes in net and was one of three finalists for the WCHA Goaltender of the Year award, finishing the season with a 22-2 record, 25 goals allowed (1.05) and 428 saves (.945) in 24 games.

With a few major losses, sophomore Joy Dunne – former National Rookie of the Year and the Buckeyes' only preseason All-WCHA team inclusion – hopes to provide the Buckeyes with some stability. Dunne led the team with 24 goals scored last season, including the lone and game-winning goal scored in the team's national championship victory.

With Dunne becoming the first player in the program's history to be named Rookie of the Year and her sisters Jessica and Jincy having impressive careers at Ohio State in their own right, the Dunne family has become a trademark of Ohio State hockey. Joy Dunne had quite the legacy to live up to coming to Ohio State, following Jincy's remarkable four-year career that is perhaps as storied in the Ohio State program as any that had come before her or any that have come since to this point.

As a redshirt junior, Jincy was the second player in program history to be



Reynolds Travel is offering a 4-night trip to Oregon for a matchup with the Ducks!

Join Reynolds Travel for a 4-night stay in Portland with sightseeing and the Ducks game in Eugene, Ore., on Sat., Oct. 12, 2024. Departure by scheduled air to Portland on Wed., Oct. 9, and return on Sun., Oct. 13.

You can buy either a land-only package or a full package with air. The Reynolds Travel package includes:

- Round-trip scheduled air from Columbus, Ohio, on Oct. 9 to Portland, Ore., and return on Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024.
- Round-trip airport transportation (with air package only) from Portland Airport to the Embassy Suites in downtown Portland.
- Hotel accommodation for 4 nights at the Embassy Suites hotel in downtown Portland with full breakfast daily and hotel taxes.
- Optional Dinner Cruise on the Willamette River aboard the Willamette Star on Wednesday, Oct. 9 (extra cost)
- Thursday, Oct. 10: Full-day tour by motorcoach included to the Columbia River Gorge, Multnomah Falls, Mt. Hood loop, and a Winery visit (included) and lunch on own.
- Friday, Oct. 11: Full-day tour of the Oregon Coastline with stops in Seaside and Cannon Beach (lunch on own) and cost included.
- Side of end zone game tickets for the Ohio State vs Oregon game on Oct. 12 with round-trip gameday transfers from Portland to Eugene.
- Fully escorted by Reynolds Travel Management Staff.

Full cost for the **air package** is \$2,659 per person based on two to a room and the cost for the **land only package** is \$1,809 per person based on two to a room. Give us a call at 866-880-0577 or sign up online at www.reynoldstravel.com.

Reynolds Travel — Arranging Ohio State Away, Play-off and Bowl trips since 1978!

Visit our website at www.reynoldstravel.com to see more.



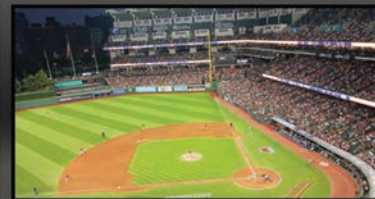
**8905 Commerce Loop Dr.
Columbus, OH 43240
Phone: 614-847-8008
Toll Free: 866-880-0577**

MAIN EVENT

TICKET SERVICE

Tickets to Events Anywhere!

Concerts • Theatre • Sporting Events



OSU Football & Basketball • Cleveland Browns • Blue Jackets
Nationwide Arena • Schottenstein Arena • NFL • NBA • NHL

We buy OSU football tickets!

614-488-9957 • 888-842-5877

ticketsohio@gmail.com

1890 Northwest Blvd., #220, Columbus, OH 43212

OHIO STATE WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY

named WCHA Defensive Player of the Year in 2018-19 and 2019-20 and then she replicated that honor the very next year. She became the first player in the history of the program to be named a first-team All-American for the second year in a row, but despite all of her accomplishments, Muzerall still thinks Joy Dunne can do more.

"I had one-on-one meetings with all of the players just a couple of weeks ago, and she has her own personal goals, and they are high. When you're of her caliber, they should be high because the Olympics will be the following year," Muzerall said. "I did coach both of her sisters, so I knew what I was getting. Although her sister was an Olympian, Joy, I think, is going to break many more records than her sister."

Standing 5-11, Dunne is the tallest skater on the team for the second year in a row. Perhaps the most important thing Muzerall wants Dunne to work on is using her size to be physical with opponents.

"She's just got the size and the power," Muzerall said. "I want her to play a little bit more like Tarzan and less like Jane and just go after people. But she has it in her, and we're excited for what she will look like over the next three years."

Dunne is joined by key returners such as graduate Kiara Zanon, who finished in a tie with Gardiner for the team high in assists with 27, and graduate and team captain Jenna Buglioni. Zanon joined the Buckeyes after three highly accomplished seasons with Penn State during which she was named the College Hockey America Conference Player of the Year twice.

Buglioni, meanwhile, is one of the few players left on the roster who was a strong contributor to the team's first national championship in 2022. A third-team All-WCHA inclusion in 2022, Buglioni finished that season with 44 points. After a bit of a down year in 2023, Buglioni was an important piece of the championship-winning puzzle last year, going for 15 goals and 23 assists in 35 games. With Buglioni's career coming to an end following the 2024-25 season, she hopes to tack one more national championship onto her resume.

"As a team goal, we want to try to defend that national championship," Buglioni said. "That's a big one for us, and just how we take care of the details every day. For myself, with it being the last year, off the ice just enjoying my teammates and the people I'm around. The time goes by really fast, so I want to make the most of every moment."

Although she hasn't been with the Buckeyes as long as Buglioni, graduate forward Makenna Webster has the talent to produce as much as anyone on the Ohio State attack. Having had two strong seasons at Wisconsin, including being named the most outstanding player in the Frozen Four during the Badgers' 2021 national championship win, Webster will hope to take a step forward in her third year with the Buckeyes. In Ohio State's national runner-up finish in 2022-23, Webster was the team's fifth-leading point scorer, going for 15 goals and 24 assists.

The only obstacle for the Buckeyes with Webster is that they have to share her with the field hockey team, where she was one of the leading point scorers in

the country last year. When asked about a loaded weekend for Webster, which included a field hockey game on Sept. 20, an ice hockey game the next day and a field hockey game the day after that, Muzerall wasn't concerned at all.

"That's just normal for her for the past three years," Muzerall said. "Makenna is a sensational person. How she balances it when she's not able to compete with us because of her allotted time with compliance, she's there watching and cheering the girls on, running the clock, so she's very visible."

Graduate goaltender Amanda Thiele also returns for another season in Columbus. Though she wasn't as effective in the 2023-24 season as Kirk, giving up 24 goals in 17 games played and saving 228 shots, Thiele still was serviceable in net for the Buckeyes, finishing the season with a .905 save percentage.

"We recruit from the back up, and so when you have somebody with five years under her belt and (knows) how we coach and how we train, it's nice to have that," Muzerall said. "She's steady, she's calm, and very reliable. It was a flip of a coin between her and Kirk last year, and we got a transfer in (Hailey MacLeod) from Minnesota Duluth, so we're excited to have someone push Thiele in practice every day."

MacLeod, a highly accomplished junior from Duluth, had the highest save percentage in the WCHA last season at .948. MacLeod could provide the Buckeyes with a reliable option on day one and is someone who could take over for Thiele after she departs.

With all of the changes in college sports – NIL and the transfer portal allowing players to move between teams freely during the offseason – becoming a dynasty might be even tougher than in the past. The key for Muzerall and the Buckeyes has been maintaining their culture and constructing a roster that reinforces it.

"Three things we look for, I'd say when you're out recruiting, is your skating ability, your IQ and your relentless personality," Muzerall said. "You have to have two of those three, but one of those two has to be that relentless pursuit, because we're not going to coach you up from a five to a 10 every day. I'll coach you down from a 10 to a seven, but you've got to be ready to go."

Muzerall knows now that the intensity with which the Buckeyes practice may be different from how it's done at other programs. With that in mind, she isn't surprised if some of the newcomers have to get used to certain things.

"It's going to require some coaching because we've got a couple transfers and their style of play is very different from our style being very aggressive and relentless. Then we've been after them in their fitness because I think other programs train very differently than we do here at Ohio State."

Although some of the new transfers apparently have some catching up to do, it is yet another talented group of players brought in by Muzerall. The transfer class includes the previously mentioned MacLeod, forward Maddi Wheeler, defenseman Emily Zumwinkle and fellow defenseman Sara Swiderski.

The most depleted area of Ohio State's roster following the offseason of its na-

2024-25 Ohio State Women's Hockey Roster

No.	Name	Yr.	Pos.	Ht.	Hometown	High School/Last Team
1	Genny Klein	Fr.	G	5-6	Apple Valley, Minn.	Shattuck-St. Mary's
4	Sara Swiderski	Jr.	D	5-9	Langley, B.C.	Rink Hockey Academy Kelowna
6	Emily Zumwinkle	Sr.	D	5-9	Excelsior, Minn.	Breck School
7	Emma Peschel	Jr.	D	5-10	Edina, Minn.	Benilde-St. Margaret's
8	Makenna Webster	Gr.	F	5-2	St. Louis	Shattuck St. Mary's
9	Josie St. Martin	Fr.	F	5-4	Stillwater, Minn.	Stillwater Area H.S.
10	Jenna Buglioni	Gr.	F	5-3	Port Moody, B.C.	Gleneagle Secondary
11	Kiara Zanon	Gr.	F	5-5	Fairport, N.Y.	Bishop Kearney
12	Grace McCoshen	Fr.	D	5-6	Northfield, Minn.	Northfield H.S.
13	Riley Brengman	Gr.	D	5-5	China, Mich.	Regina H.S.
14	Mira Jungåker	Fr.	D	5-7	Jönköping, Sweden	NA
16	Joy Dunne	So.	F	5-11	Ofallon, Mo.	The Fulton School
17	Jocelyn Amos	So.	F	5-7	Ailsa Craig, Ontario	Medway H.S.
18	Maddi Wheeler	Gr.	F	5-4	Erinsville, Ontario	Napanee District Secondary
19	Jordyn Petrie	Fr.	F	5-9	Lincoln, Neb.	Shattuck-St. Mary's
20	Maria Roth	Fr.	D	5-9	Dubuque, Iowa	Shattuck-St. Mary's
22	Sloane Matthews	Jr.	F	5-6	Plymouth, Minn.	Wayzata H.S.
27	Jordan Baxter	So.	F	5-7	Coquitlum, B.C.	North Delta Secondary
28	Brooke Disher	Jr.	D	5-8	Fort St. John, B.C.	George Elliot Secondary
30	Amanda Thiele	Gr.	G	5-10	Milford, Mich.	Milford H.S.
34	Lexington Secreto	Jr.	G	5-7	New Windsor, N.Y.	Phillips Academy
35	Hailey MacLeod	Jr.	G	6-0	Abbotsford, B.C.	Delta Hockey Academy

Head Coach — Nadine Muzerall.

Associate Head Coach — James Wisniewski. **Assistant Coach** — Kelsey Cline. **Director of Operations** — Lauren Spring. **Assistant Director, Athletic Training** — Kevin Lennon. **Academic Counselor and Student-Athlete Engagement Coordinator** — Alex Sommer.

tional championship win may have been its defense. Losing key contributors Hadley Hartmetz (9-24-33), Cayla Barnes (11-25-36) and Stephanie Markowski (3-24-27), it is certainly understandable that the Buckeyes put an emphasis on the position in the transfer portal.

Zumwinkle comes to the Buckeyes after playing in 116 games for Minnesota over the course of three seasons, so she provides some valuable experience to the team. She could end up playing alongside Swiderski, who had a two-year run at Clarkson before transferring to Ohio State. Swiderski appeared in 78 games at Clarkson, recording four goals and 15 assists.

Wheeler is the lone attacker of the group and comes from Ohio State's biggest competitor, Wisconsin. Wheeler scored 10 goals and added 14 assists for the Badgers last season and will reunite with Webster, as the duo were teammates at Wisconsin.

The transfer class is joined by a slew of freshmen newcomers who hope to have close to the impact that current sophomores Dunne and forward Jocelyn Amos had during their freshman season. Amos may have been overshadowed slightly by the production of Dunne, but she put together a very nice season in her own right, with 15 goals and 15 assists. Amos' 15 goals were tied for fourth most on the team.

The Buckeyes will attempt to build for the future with six new freshmen on the roster, including goalie Genny Klein, defensemen Mira Jungåker and Grace McCoshen, and forwards Josie St. Martin, Jordyn Petrie and Maria Roth.

"Each year when we have new girls

come in, whether they're transfers or freshmen, they just elevate our culture that much more," Buglioni said. "We have our foundation and our culture that's been built years before I was even here, and that stays very strong, and what Coach Muzerall has brought in for us stays strong, but they just bring another little spunk, another little layer to our culture that we love, and they've all been great. They're awesome people, great on the ice, so I have nothing bad to say about our culture."

It's impossible to know if this season will end with the immense joy that comes with winning gold or the anguish of anything less, but at the very least, Muzerall predicts to have another good team.

"That was a phenomenal team that we had last year, but I look at it as we've just reloaded," she said. "We don't have as much quantity on the team. Our bench is smaller, but the quality is still very good. We're just putting together our power play, and we had a hard time deciding who should be where because it's a lot of offensive talent."

Over the Buckeyes opening weekend, the team showed they still did have some adjustments to make, suffering back-to-back losses to Minnesota Duluth, 2-1 on Sept. 21 and 4-3 on Sept. 22.

Even with the two championships in three seasons, there could never be signs of complacency within the Ohio State program, at least not with the blue-collar Muzerall at the helm of the program.

"It's very sexy to want to come here to Ohio State," Muzerall said. "The brand speaks for itself. Winning national championships and having jewelry is something that kids want to be a part of. But when you get on the inside, it's hard as hell."

B1G Reveals Full '24-25 Conference Schedule

Ohio State's 2024-25 schedule is now complete after the Big Ten announced the full season slates for each of the 18 conference teams on Sept. 19.

COURT REPORT Patrick Engels

The Buckeyes and first-year head coach Jake Diebler begin their 20-game Big Ten slate with two games in early December, first heading to College Park to face off against Maryland on Dec. 4 and then hosting Rutgers – which features two potential NBA lottery picks in freshman guards Ace Bailey and Dylan Harper – on Dec. 7.

The Terrapins are one of three teams the Buckeyes will play home-and-home series against during the 2024-25 season as part of the adjusted Big Ten schedule that accounts for the additions of Oregon, Washington, UCLA and USC to the conference. Each team in the Big Ten has seven home and seven away games, and three home-and-away series.

Ohio State will host the Terrapins at Value City Arena on Feb. 6, while it will also play a home-and-home series with both Nebraska (Feb. 9 away, March 4 home) and Indiana (Jan. 17 home, March 8 away).

After briefly returning to nonconference play to close out the 2024 calendar year, Ohio State will begin the brunt of its Big Ten slate with a home matchup against Michigan State on Jan. 3. The Buckeyes have won their last two games against legendary head coach Tom Izzo and the Spartans, most recently a last-second 60-57 win in East Lansing last February in Diebler's third game as interim head coach.

The Buckeyes' matchup with the Spartans is the beginning of an eight-game January schedule that includes home games against new Big Ten foe Oregon (Jan. 9), the Hoosiers and Iowa (Jan. 27) and road contests against Minnesota (Jan. 6), Wisconsin (Jan. 14), Purdue (Jan. 21) and Penn State (Jan. 30).

Ohio State will welcome Oregon to Columbus in what is the first matchup between the two teams as Big Ten opponents. In a more historic matchup that month, the Buckeyes will travel to Mackey Arena to face off against Matt Painter and Purdue in what will be a rematch of last season's game in Columbus when the Buckeyes knocked off then-No.

2 Purdue 73-69 in Diebler's first game as interim head coach.

The Buckeyes will then play eight games in February, a slate that most notably includes a late-month West Coast trip to Los Angeles, where Diebler's squad will travel to UCLA on Feb. 23 and USC on Feb. 26. Ohio State last played against USC in 1997, when former Buckeye guard Michael Redd scored 30 points in a 79-73 win over the Trojans in Columbus, while the Buckeyes are more familiar with Mick Cronin's UCLA squad, having beaten them early last season in the CBS Sports Classic.

Ohio State will also welcome new Big Ten team Washington to Value City Arena on Feb. 12, part of a four-game home slate that month that includes games against Maryland, archrival Michigan on Feb. 16 and Northwestern on Feb. 20.

The matchup with the Wolverines provides much intrigue because it will mark the return of former Ohio State guard Roddy Gayle Jr., who transferred from the Buckeyes to Michigan this offseason, while it will also be a battle between two first-year head coaches, Diebler and Dusty May, who the Buckeyes were interested in hiring this offseason.

Also on the Buckeyes' schedule in February is a road contest against Illinois (Feb. 2), all coming before the home contest against Nebraska and a road game at Indiana's historic Assembly Hall to close out the regular season in March.

These 20 conference games now join an 11-game nonconference slate that includes home games against Youngstown State (Nov. 11), Evansville (Nov. 19), Campbell (Nov. 22), Green Bay (Nov. 25), Pittsburgh (Nov. 29), Valparaiso (Dec. 17) and Indiana State (Dec. 29), neutral-site contests against Texas (Nov. 4), Auburn (Dec. 14) and Kentucky (Dec. 21) and a road game against Texas A&M (Nov. 15).

All tip-off times and TV networks for each of Ohio State's 31 regular-season games have yet to be determined as BSB went to press.

Towns Hired As Harvard Assistant

Former Ohio State forward Seth Towns' eventful college basketball journey continued on Sept. 13 when he was hired to serve as an assistant coach at his alma mater Harvard.

"We are more than thrilled to welcome Seth back to Harvard basketball and to the Harvard community as a whole," longtime Harvard head coach Tommy Amaker said. "Seth embodied our program's ideals as a

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2025 who have issued a verbal commitment to play basketball at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Dorian Jones	G	6-4	160	★★★	Richmond Heights, Ohio

scholar and baller and has demonstrated tremendous resiliency and perseverance throughout his career.

"Rather than follow the paths of others, Seth has always gone where there is no path and left a trail. We look forward to the impact he will have on our current student-athletes."

Towns, whose injury-riddled career spanned a rare eight seasons, played for the Crimson from 2016-18 before missing the 2018-20 seasons due to a knee injury. He averaged 14.2 points, 5.0 rebounds, 1.6 assists and 0.9 steals per contest over his two seasons playing for Amaker's team, earning Ivy League Player of the Year and AP All-American honorable mention as a sophomore in 2017-18.

Towns, a Columbus native and standout at Northland High School, then returned to his hometown to play for Ohio State as a graduate student in 2020. The forward played 25 games for the Buckeyes in 2020-21, helping them earn a No. 2 seed in the NCAA Tournament by averaging 3.8 points and 2.2 rebounds off the bench. However, his Ohio State career was cut short due to a recurring back injury that forced him to miss the entire 2021-22 season and medically retire from basketball in September 2022.

Towns' Ohio State career also included a notable off-the-court moment when he was detained by Columbus police in May 2020 during a protest held days after the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police. Towns was never arrested and was released by police shortly after being detained.

Towns' medical retirement was brief. The forward decided in 2023 to return to college basketball and transferred to Howard for his eighth college basketball season, where the 26-year-old forward became a key contributor for the Bison.

He helped lead the program to an MEAC championship win and an NCAA Tournament appearance by averaging 14.2 points, 6.5 rebounds and 2.5 assists per game.

Now, Towns will look to start a new chapter in his long college basketball journey on the sidelines for Harvard, which is coming off a 14-13 season in Amaker's 18th season as head coach.

The Crimson will begin their season Nov. 8 at Navy.

Oden Leaving Butler To Focus On Business

While one former Buckeye found a new job in the collegiate coaching ranks this season, another decided to step away from his position.

Former Ohio State All-American center and No. 1 overall NBA draft pick Greg Oden told IndyStar on Sept. 12 that he is leaving his role as Butler men's basketball assistant coach after spending two seasons with the program. Oden, 36, has decided to focus on his business interests outside of coaching.

Oden was hired by head coach Thad Matta – who coached the 7-0 center at Ohio State during his lone season with the Buck-

eyes in 2006-07 – in 2022, becoming one of the former Buckeye leader's first staff additions upon arriving at Butler. He originally served as the program's director of basketball operations but was moved into an assistant coaching role when the NCAA expanded the number of staff members who could serve as on-court instructors.

In his two seasons at Butler, Oden helped lead Matta and the Bulldogs to a combined 32-33 record (15-25 in the Big East) and an NIT appearance in 2023-24.

"Greg has meant a ton to me both personally and professionally for two decades," Matta said. "When I came back to Butler a few years ago, I wanted Greg to be a part of what we were building. He set a good example for the young men in our program, and I know he'll continue to support them. All of us wish Greg and his family nothing but the best in this next phase of his career."

Oden played just one season at Ohio State, but it was a memorable one. Entering the program as a McDonald's All-American and the highest-rated recruit in Ohio State history, he lived up to the expectations, totaling 15.7 points, 9.6 rebounds and 3.3 blocks in 32 games on his way to a consensus All-American and Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year selection.

Oden's efforts, along with the play of fellow true freshman and now-NBA veteran guard Mike Conley Jr., helped Ohio State secure a 35-4 record and the program's first National Championship Game appearance since 1962. It also allowed him to become the first overall selection in the 2007 NBA draft by the Portland Trail Blazers, although his NBA career was short-lived, playing just three seasons due to recurring knee injuries.

Oden will be inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame on Oct. 4.

As for Matta and Butler, the former Buckeyes coach made a swift replacement of Oden, hiring Indiana Pacers assistant coach and former Iowa guard Connor McCaffrey to fill the vacancy on Sept. 16.

McCaffrey, the son of longtime Iowa head men's basketball coach Fran McCaffrey and current boyfriend of Indiana Fever superstar rookie guard Caitlin Clark, will now coach his younger brother, Patrick, who is entering his first year at Butler after transferring from Iowa.

Connor McCaffrey joins a Butler coaching staff that also includes former Ohio State standout guard Jon Diebler, whom his older brother Jake tried to hire away from the Bulldogs this spring but was unable to do so due to both Ohio and Ohio State University nepotism laws.

OSU Commits Earn New 247Sports Ratings

247Sports updated its composite rankings for each men's basketball high school prospect on Sept. 11, and that means multiple Ohio State commits now have different ratings entering the 2024-25 high school season.

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




OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2026 who have issued a verbal commitment to play basketball at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Marcus Johnson	G	6-1	175	★★★★★	Garfield Heights, Ohio
Alex Smith	F	6-9	195	N/A	Upper Arlington, Ohio

Starting with the 2025 class, Cleveland Richmond Heights four-star shooting guard Dorian Jones (6-4, 160) remained the No. 2 player in the state of Ohio, but he did see a bit of a ratings decline on the national scale. He dropped 37 spots in the national rankings from No. 72 to No. 109 since he committed to Ohio State on July 1, while he also fell six spots in the position rankings from No. 12 to No. 18.

In 2026, Cleveland Garfield Heights four-star point guard Marcus Johnson (6-1, 175) also suffered a decline in the rankings. Since committing to Ohio State in April, he dropped five spots in the national rankings from No. 24 to No. 29 and two spots in the position rankings from No. 4 to No. 6. He also lost his title as Ohio's top 2026 prospect, falling to No. 2 in the state rankings behind Hudson Western Reserve Academy five-star small forward Anthony Thompson (6-7, 185), who holds an offer from the Buckeyes.

Diebler's most recent 2026 commit, Upper Arlington power forward Alex Smith (6-9, 195), remains unranked in the 247Sports Composite ratings, but the site's standard rankings do have the junior as a three-star prospect who is the fourth-best player in Ohio, 23rd-best power forward and 142nd-best player in the nation.

Smith committed to Ohio State on Sept. 2 over Cincinnati, Indiana, Xavier and Nebraska.

As for Ohio State's key recruiting targets, Napa (Calif.) Prolific Prep five-star 2025 combo guard Darryn Peterson (6-9, 195) – who visited Ohio State the weekend of Aug. 30 and placed the Buckeyes in his top four soon after – remains the nation's third-best overall prospect and No. 1-ranked combo guard. Peterson's teammate and five-star 2025 power forward Niko Bundalo (6-10, 215) – who visited Ohio State on Sept. 21 for the football team's game against Marshall – is now the nation's 26th-best prospect and seventh best at his position.

Bundalo is six spots ahead of Branson (Mo.) Link Academy four-star 2025 combo guard Jerry Easter (6-3, 183) in the national rankings at No. 32, whom Ohio State is also recruiting. Easter, who is the fourth best at his position and third best from Missouri, plays for the same high school that produced former Ohio State and current Tennessee center Felix Okpara.

Ohio State is also after Easter's Link Academy teammate, four-star shooting guard Davion Hannah (6-5, 175), who visited the Buckeyes' campus alongside Bundalo on Sept. 21. He is the nation's 31st-best prospect, seventh-best shooting guard, and No. 2 player in Missouri in the 2025 class.

Other Notes And Tidbits

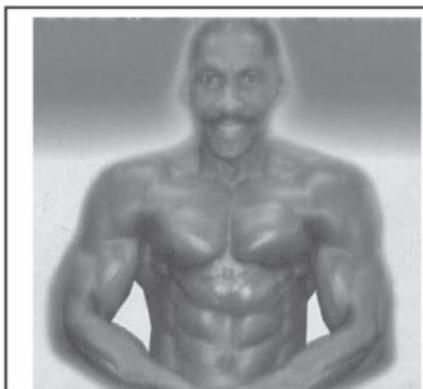
In other recruiting news, Ohio State and Diebler continue to be in the running for Glen Head (N.Y.) Long Island Lutheran four-star 2025 shooting guard Kiyon Anthony (6-5, 185), who told On3 Sports that he plans to take a visit to Columbus this year and that the Buckeyes are "really high on my list." Anthony, the No. 28 overall prospect and No. 1

player in New York in the 2025 class, is the son of 10-time NBA All-Star Carmelo Anthony and previously placed Ohio State among his top six schools along with Auburn, Florida State, Rutgers, Syracuse and USC.

Davidson (N.C.) Davidson Day four-star 2025 combo guard Isaiah Denis (6-5, 165) said he enjoyed his first official visit to Ohio State on Sept. 10. "I loved it over there," Denis told On3. "The program speaks for itself with just the name. The facilities are top-notch, and their plan for me really fits what I am looking for. I think they are going to push me to get better every day and become the best version of me on and off the court." Denis, the nation's 62nd-best player and ninth-best combo guard in the class, has a pre-existing relationship with Ohio State associate head coach Joel Justus, which could give the Buckeyes an advantage over the 24 other schools that have offered him.

Ohio State is no longer in the running for Toledo Whitmer three-star shooting guard Antione West (6-3, 175). West, the nation's 162nd-best prospect and 30th-best shooting guard and the fifth-best player in Ohio who visited Ohio State last fall, placed the Buckeyes outside of his final two, which includes Nebraska and Purdue. West will announce his commitment on Oct. 1.

Ohio State will host Greenville (S.C.) Legacy Early College 2026 point guard Dezhon Hall (6-3, 180) on an unofficial visit on Oct. 5, according to Recruits Zone. Hall, who is unranked by 247Sports, had previously visited Ohio State, but it came when Chris Holtmann was head coach, with former assistant Jack Owens serving as his primary recruiter. Hall told ZagsBlog.com that assistant coach Talor Battle has kept in contact with him, and he can't wait to return for an unofficial visit.

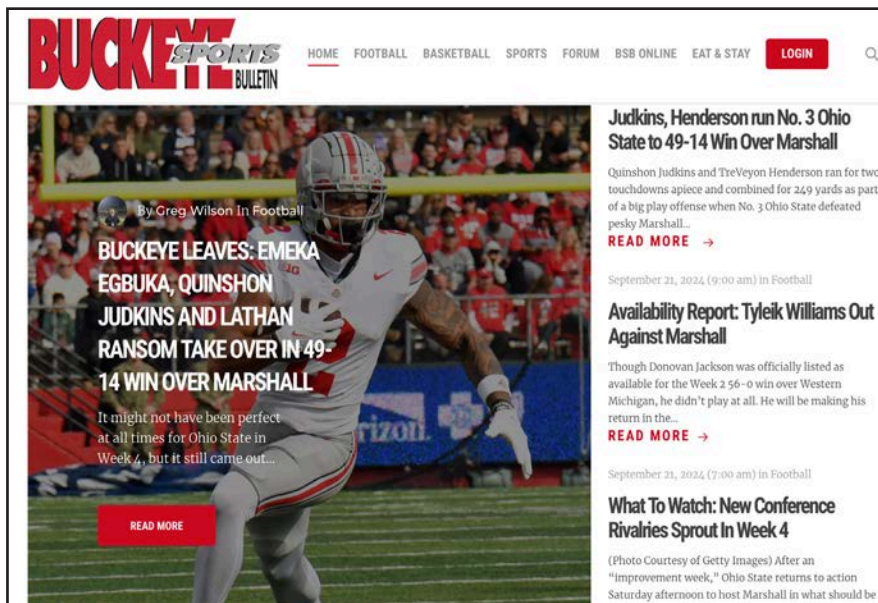


TIM SWANSON
Certified Personal Trainer

Flat Stomach • Weight Loss • Strength Training • Cardio Kick-Boxing • Boot Camp

614-886-9331
foreverfitswan@yahoo.com

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



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

Schedule Continuing To Fill Out For Buckeyes

Ohio State knew which teams it would be facing in conference play this season, but it will now be able to make travel plans with the Big Ten releasing the full schedule on Sept. 19.

The Buckeyes' conference slate begins with a home game against Illinois on Dec. 8, with a road trip to Rutgers on Dec. 29 the only other conference game for this calendar year.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Braden Moles

Ohio State will return to The Schottenstein Center on Jan. 5 to host Northwestern before traveling to Michigan on Jan. 8 and will then welcome Oregon to the Big Ten by hosting the Ducks on Jan. 12. The Buckeyes will play a pair of road games at Wisconsin on Jan. 16 and Penn State on Jan. 19 before returning home for Maryland on Jan. 23.

The Buckeyes will take off again to play at Nebraska on Jan. 26, return home for Washington on Feb. 2 and then fly out to play at UCLA on Feb. 5 and USC on Feb. 8. After nearly a week off, Ohio State will host Minnesota on Feb. 13 and Iowa on Feb. 17 before playing at Indiana on Feb. 20.

The regular season will then close out at home against Purdue on Feb. 23 and Michigan State on Feb. 26, wrapping up with a road contest at Maryland on March 2.

The only nonconference game announced by Ohio State is that it will face Stanford in the Invisalign Bay Area Women's Classic on Dec. 20 in Los Angeles. But the Buckeyes have been promoted as being part of another event, set to compete in the Daytona Beach Classic from Nov. 28-29 with games against Old Dominion and Utah State.



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

OSU Women's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2025 who have issued a verbal commitment to play basketball at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Daria Biriuk	G	6-1	★★★★	Bell Buckle (Tenn.) Webb School

The Buckeyes have also been included on several nonconference schedules released by other schools. Cleveland State announced it will travel to Ohio State on Nov. 5 in what will be the season opener, and Charlotte announced it will face the Buckeyes a week later on Nov. 12.

Ohio State's first road game of the season will be at Belmont on Nov. 17, completing a home-and-home series that began last season. The Buckeyes will also hit the road against Ohio University on Nov. 20 before hosting Bowling Green and sophomore wing Keiryn McGuff – the daughter of Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff – on Nov. 24.

The last reported nonconference matchup will be a home game against Youngstown State on Dec. 14. The schedule as it stands would be 27 games, two fewer regular-season contests than each of the last two seasons, so it remains possible that a game or two gets added once the nonconference schedule is officially announced.

Biriuk Becomes First 2025 Pledge For Buckeyes

McGuff has made his first addition to Ohio State's 2025 recruiting class in Bell Buckle (Tenn.) Webb School four-star wing Daria Biriuk (6-1), who announced her pledge to the Buckeyes on Sept. 20.

Biriuk included the Buckeyes among her top three schools in recent weeks along with Mississippi State and Vanderbilt. She took an official visit to Ohio State from Sept. 5-8, according to On3's Talia Goodman, during which she told McGuff she was committing.

"I still can't believe I'm committed," Biriuk said during her commitment ceremony. "It seemed so far away from when I just started playing AAU (in America). I didn't expect myself to play college at that level. When coaches started talking to me, I really thought maybe I'd get some small offers. Not a lot of people get that opportunity. I'm so excited."

Biriuk is originally from Ukraine, though her family fled to the United States in 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Despite those challenges, Biriuk was able to embark on an impressive prep career, ranking No. 73 in the country, according to ESPN, after averaging 17.9 points, 5.3 rebounds, 2.4 assists and 2.6 steals as a senior.

She was able to develop a relationship with several people close to Ohio State's basketball program during her recruitment. Both Jalon and Kennedy Cambridge played their high school basketball in Tennessee, while two of McGuff's children – Lukas and Keiryn – attended Webb before returning to play high school basketball in Ohio.

Biriuk is the first pledge in what will likely be a smaller class for Ohio State after signing five players from the high school ranks during last year's recruiting cycle. The Buckeyes will still have plenty of talent

to replace, though, with this expected to be the final season for Madison Greene, Taylor Thierry, Eboni Walker and graduate transfer Ajae Petty.

In other recruiting news, Springboro, Ohio, four-star guard Bryn Martin (6-1) announced her commitment to Washington on Sept. 11. She included the Buckeyes among her top 10 schools back in June and took an official visit for the football team's season opener against Akron, though evidently the late visit wasn't enough to sway the tides.

McMahon Adds To Gold Medal Collection

Ohio State junior forward Cotie McMahon has added another gold medal to her extensive résumé, helping lead the United States to a first-place finish in the FIBA 3x3 U23 World Cup played in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from Sept. 11-15.

The United States went undefeated in the event, taking down Japan (21-14), Italy (21-14), Spain (18-17) and New Zealand (21-13) in pool play before defeating France, 21-11, in the quarterfinals, China, 19-10, in the semifinals and the Netherlands, 18-15, in the finals.

McMahon tallied 32 points in the event, while teammates Sania Nicole Feagin (South Carolina) and Harmoni Turner (Harvard) scored 44 and 40 points, respectively. Azana Baines (Seton Hall) also added 23 points. This was the first gold medal for the women in this tournament, with the first iteration of the event taking place in 2018.

This was McMahon's fourth time representing Team USA and her third gold medal. She previously won gold with the United States in the FIBA U19 World Cup last year and the FIBA U18 Americas Championship in 2022. She was also on last year's FIBA 3x3 U23 team that finished 11th out of 20 teams.

Murray, Guzdanski Add Assistant Coach Titles

Ohio State's staff is finalized for this season, after a pair of longtime McGuff staffers – Ryan Murray and Reid Guzdanski – added assistant coach to their titles.

Guzdanski is entering his eighth season at Ohio State and will continue to serve as director of recruiting operations and professional development in addition to his assistant coaching duties. Murray, meanwhile, is entering his sixth season and will be an assistant coach in addition to director of scouting and player development.

Guzdanski and Murray fill the void left by the departure of former assistant coach Wesley Brooks, who left Ohio State this off-season to become the head coach for the Utah State women's basketball program.

McGuff's staff is rounded out by associate head coach Carla Morrow, who is entering her sixth season; assistant coach Jalen Powell, who is entering her fourth season; and director of operations and former Buck-

eye co-captain Beth Howe (2001-05), who is beginning her 12th year with the Buckeyes.

Buckeyes Considered Top-Four Seed Entering Season

Despite the loss of Jacy Sheldon and Celeste Taylor from last year's team, experts still expect Ohio State to compete for a top-four seed in the upcoming NCAA tournament.

ESPN's Charlie Creme released his first bracketology of the season on Sept. 18. He has the Buckeyes as a No. 4 seed, which would set the Buckeyes up to host their first two games for the third consecutive season.

Creme has Ohio State as the No. 4 seed in one of the two Birmingham, Ala., regions, with Spokane, Wash., hosting the other regional sites. In Ohio State's region, Creme has reigning national champion South Carolina at No. 1, followed by No. 2 Iowa State and No. 3 NC State. His other No. 1 seeds are UConn, UCLA and USC, with the latter two teams joining the Big Ten beginning this season.

In addition to those three Big Ten teams, Creme also has No. 5 Maryland, No. 6 Nebraska, No. 7 Illinois, No. 7 Indiana, No. 7 Michigan State, No. 8 Iowa and No. 11 Minnesota in the field from the conference.

WNBA Regular Season Comes To A Close

The WNBA regular season officially came to a close on Sept. 19, with several Buckeyes headed home for the fall and others readying for postseason play which began on Sept. 22.

One Buckeye who will watch the play-offs from home is Sheldon, whose Dallas Wings finished the regular season with a 9-31 record and finished 11th in the league standings. Sheldon finished her rookie season with 40 appearances (26 starts) and averaged 5.4 points, 2.5 assists and 2.1 rebounds, and she shot 38.6 percent from the field.

While Sheldon's first season did not end as she nor her team hoped, she will continue to hit the floor this offseason with Australia's Townsville Fire of the Women's National Basketball League, with the season set to begin on Oct. 23.

The other two Buckeyes in the WNBA, however – Kelsey Mitchell of the Indiana Fever and Taylor of the Phoenix Mercury – will play in the postseason. Taylor and the Mercury finished the regular season with a 19-21 record, earning the No. 7 seed in the playoffs and a date with the second-seeded Minnesota Lynx. While Taylor struggled to see the floor during her brief stints with the Fever and Connecticut Sun, she has found a consistent role in Phoenix's rotation, averaging 3.5 points and 1.8 rebounds in 20.0 minutes per game.

Mitchell and the Fever, meanwhile, finished 20-20 in the regular season and will face the third-seeded Sun. Aided by the addition of Caitlin Clark, it has been a career year for Mitchell, who was named an All-Star and has averaged a career-high 19.2 points per game on 46.8 percent shooting, also a career high.

RB Duo Gives Opponents The Run Around

When Quinshon Judkins entered the transfer portal following his sophomore season at Ole Miss, he didn't really have a specific destination in mind. He knew he wanted to go somewhere where he could contend for a national championship and where he wasn't the only horse in the barn.

**THE FACTS
MAN
Mike Wachsmen**

Judkins has led college football the past two seasons in carries with 545, which is a lot of wear and tear for a guy who hopes to one day be tearing up the NFL. After doing his research and checking around, he thought about Ohio State.

The Buckeyes were a huge brand and always in the national title chase, and they were known for having a big-time offense. Most importantly, they also had their own horse in TreVeyon Henderson, so it could end up being a good fit. There was only one problem – when he landed in Columbus it was snowing, and he had no knowledge of how to react to that.

Growing up in Montgomery, Ala., Judkins wasn't familiar with cold or snow, so it could easily have been a negative. But he took it in stride, and after talking with Henderson about the culture and the fit, Judkins cast his lot with the Buckeyes.

"I think growing up, Ohio State isn't just a school you hear about at that certain moment," he said during spring camp. "With all the accolades they've had, all the great players that have come through here, some of my favorite running backs have played here. It's always a school you've looked at growing up and someplace I wanted to be to help them win."

OSU is better for it, and the rest of the Big Ten could be worse off.

Judkins is powerfully built at 6-0, 219 pounds, and he led college football in forced missed tackles in his first two seasons toting the rock for the Rebels. That was his expected role for the Buckeyes, a complement to Henderson, who is a breakaway threat.

But to this point, Judkins has provided a bit of everything, including some speed of his own. That was on display during an 86-yard touchdown run against Marshall, a simple stretch play to the left where Judkins took the ball, planted his foot, evaded one tackler and was gone.

"I turned around to see if there was a flag on the play, but after that, I was super excited about it," Judkins said.

He has proved to be the boost the Buckeyes' ground game needed as OSU is currently second in the nation in rushing yards per carry (7.0), behind Boise State.

There is always a little trepidation bringing in someone from the outside, from another program. Bad habits could have been learned, or they could have a "me first" attitude.

But there hasn't been any of that with Judkins.

"I appreciate how hard he plays," Buckeye coach Ryan Day said. "His pad level, he runs, he's got versatility which you can see. He gets behind his pads and runs physical. He's got a

great attitude. You can coach Quinshon hard, and he looks you in the eye and almost appreciates the fact that you coach him hard. It says a lot about him as a person. I think he enjoys being part of this program, and he's been nothing but a great teammate so far."

According to Day, Henderson actually had the most say in whether Judkins should come in. Henderson is no slouch himself, rushing for over 1,000 yards as a freshman and showing a burst and elusiveness that few backs possess. But he has also been banged up, so the thought was that maybe another elite back could lighten his workload and keep him fresh for the entire season, which in theory will be longer with the expanded College Football Playoff. More games means more work, so rotating backs is a good thing.

Quarterback Will Howard, a transfer like Judkins, says his job is much easier when No. 1 is in the backfield with him.

"He's different, man, he's different," Howard said. "He's built different. He's a different beast – he's physical, he's fast. I mean, you saw it on that breakaway run. There's not much that the guy can't do. And on top of that, he's one of my favorite people on the team. I love that dude. I would do anything for him. The place that he's making it, it's a compound of all the work he's put in since he's been here, and I'm excited for him because he's only scratching the surface of what he's capable of – and he's already doing some pretty damn good things."

Judkins prides himself on hard work and on putting in extra effort, and that has seemed to rub off on his teammates.

"I think it's a brotherhood," he said. "Everybody has put blood, sweat and tears into this program. Everybody has gotten up at 5 in the morning to get in the building and get trained. It's that you want it for the person beside you, just knowing I can trust that guy. He's got me, and he's going to go out there and make a play."

Judkins and Henderson are the beneficiaries of a stylistic shift in philosophy for Day and the Buckeye offense. Thought of for years as a finesse and speed team, Day is slowly transitioning it to more of a power approach. That approach is about being tougher, something that has been lacking in three straight losses to Michigan and a couple of bowl setbacks. From the backs to the linemen to the receivers, Day is trying to instill a mentality of digging down deep and doing whatever is necessary to make a play.

Senior receiver Emeka Egbuka, who had over 100 receiving yards and took a short Howard pass and turned on the afterburners on the way to a 68-yard touchdown, loves to be part of the running backs' success and understands that a receiver has responsibilities beyond just catching the football.

"Blocking was an emphasis coming into this year because blocking downfield is where you find the really explosive plays," Egbuka said. "If you watch in years past, plays that could have been touchdowns are tackles made by safeties and cornerbacks. It's never going to be a defensive lineman chasing them down the field for 30 yards. So that really falls on the receivers to get that job done. Blocking is a mentality thing. It can be partially technique on the outside, but you have to want to block. You have to come off the ball every run play like it's a pass play, to keep that threat of pass and run there at all times. It's something we have

been trying to have that going for us every single game."

Ohio State averaged nearly 10 yards per play against the Herd, including 9.0 rushing the ball.

So the toughness seems to be setting in, though there is always room to get better.

"I think what you're seeing is an identity that's slowly getting molded here where we are explosive on the perimeter," Day said. "There's some things that we can do better there and coach better, but we are trying to stretch the field vertically. When you think back to when we had Justin (Fields) and J.T. (Barrett), it was just a different running game. I've started to see that come back a little bit."

For his part, Marshall coach Charles Huff was impressed with both the mentality and the physical attributes of the Buckeyes.

"Offensively, I mean 2019 LSU, 2021 Alabama – they're probably in that realm. I mean they're really good, like really good."

LSU won the national title and Alabama played for it, so that's some pretty good company to be part of.

Quick Hits

- It was like 2017 all over again for the Ohio State special teams.

There were three straight kickoffs out of bounds by Jayden Fielding, which resulted in a personnel change and had fans thinking back to the disastrous year when the Buckeyes could not get their special teams right.

Urban Meyer always wanted to kick the ball to a specific corner, around the 5-yard line, and push the coverage to that side of the field. But too often Ohio State either kicked the ball out of bounds or allowed too much return yardage. The first time Fielding did it, it almost looked like he hit the ball wrong. The second time you figured it was something else. And the third time you thought, "This is ridiculous." It can't be *that* hard to kick a football straight, can it? Throw in a muffed punt by Brandon Inniss that was recovered by Marshall but negated by a penalty and it was nothing close to a special

day for the specialty units.

- The old-school T-formation look that Chip Kelly used on Howard's touchdown dive in the second quarter was a thing of beauty and took you back to the days when Woody Hayes was bragging about three yards and a cloud of dust. Kelly has been innovative in creating run schemes, and that was just the latest. He used run counters and misdirection, used extra blockers and put the backs in different places behind or next to Howard, to better disguise where the play is designed to go. He has really boosted the offense, and you have to think that there's more in his trick bag. With Big Ten play kicking off, it will be fun to keep watch on what new wrinkles Kelly brings out.

"You never know what you're going to get with Coach Kelly," Howard said. "He'll do just about anything, and I think that's the cool part about it. It keeps defenses on their toes."

- Huff is not only a good coach, but he also has a sense of humor. In the days leading up to the game, he knew that his Herd was at a talent disadvantage, so he was thinking of a way to help that by maybe getting a few Ohio State players to Huntington to don the green and white.

"I feel good about the players we have, but I'd love to have some of those guys from Ohio State, too. So if they want to transfer on down, we've got a Tudor's Biscuit NIL deal, all you can eat," he joked. "Any of those guys that run really, really fast at Ohio State like Tudor's Biscuits. I promise you, all you can eat, all day if you transfer here."

He was actually asked about it in the post-game, and said, "I don't think anyone's leaving for biscuits, though one of the players said on his way off, 'You got any biscuits?'"

It is certainly not your conventional NIL offer, and if you examine Tudor's menu, it definitely makes one at least think about it.

While the words are funny, the video is even better, so I advise you to seek it out and have a chuckle.



Harr's FORKLIFT SERVICE, INC

SALES | RENTAL | SERVICE | PARTS



NOBLELIFT KOMATSU®

harrs-forklift.com

**1181 Refugee Road
Columbus, OH 43207**

(614) 443-4651

Fax: (614) 443-4711

We Won The Game, If You Haven't Herd

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

During Ohio State's 49-14 win over Marshall, there was some lively back-and-forth between posters on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum's live game thread. After the Buckeyes' nearly flawless performance against Western Michigan the game before, some of the posters were almost immediately on edge when the Thundering Herd marched through the Buckeye defense on their way to the end zone, like Sherman marching to the sea. The assumption was that Ohio State was suddenly struggling because of the absence of veteran defense tackle Tyleik Williams, who was ruled out before the game.

The thundering drive left me wondering where Ohio State's vaunted depth was, as Marshall drove 75 yards in 13 plays, chewing up 6:46. The much-ballyhooed defense had given up an average of 138.0 yards in its first two games, and the Herd racked up more than half of that total on their very first possession. The defense settled down somewhat, but the highly-touted Rushmen, minus Williams, were never really able to mount much of a pass rush, recording just one sack and no quarterback hurries.

The poster criticism probably reached its peak when the Buckeye kicker – I'm not going to name him because he has already taken his fair share of public humiliation – kicked three balls out of bounds in a row, allowing Marshall to set up shop at their 35 three times, scoring once on a nine-play, 65-yard touchdown drive. By then, many of the posters were fit to be tied, leading one poster to say after the game, "I never saw so much complaining in a 49-14 game. It's just a sad, sad fan base that I'm ashamed to be a part of."

To which another poster responded, "Ashamed my a**. That's what fans do, regardless of where they're from."

I think that's especially true of Buckeye fans, especially this season, when the team made it clear that it was "beat Michigan and win the national championship or bust" and then reinforced that notion with the near perfect performance against Western Michigan.

One thing you haven't heard anyone complain about is Ohio State's offense. The Buckeyes racked up 569 yards, 506 of which they put on the stat sheet in the first three quarters, before coach Ryan Day turned the game over to the reserves. By the way, the subs were not quite as crisp against Marshall as they were against the Broncos the week before. Impressive within that 569 yards was the balance, with the Buckeyes getting 289 yards through the air and 280 on the ground. Five different Buckeyes had plays of 30 yards or more, with only Carnell Tate failing to take his big play (a 30-yard reception) to the house.

After three games, the Buckeyes are third in the nation in scoring with 52.3 points per game and fifth in total offense, averaging 552.0 yards per contest.

I have heard about Chip Kelly and his offensive wizardry for years, but because I have worked on weekends for the bulk of my adult life, I don't get much of a chance to see many of the masters of their craft in action. Now that I have had a chance to see Kelly in action, I am really impressed. It's not just the play calling.

I don't claim to be an X's and O's expert. But some of his plays are so beautifully constructed. The blockers are in the right place, the holes are in the right place, the playmakers are in the right place, the ball is in the right place, and boom. Not to mention the fact that unlike many football coaches, the guy's got some personality.

"You never know what you're going to get with Coach Kelly," Buckeye quarterback Will Howard said. "He'll do just about anything, and I think that's the cool part about it. It keeps defenses on their toes. There's still a ton of stuff I'm sure we're going to come up with, new stuff we'll create and things we'll make off what we've already done. I think

that's the fun part about it. It's a chess game. It's the game within the game."

How long will Ohio State be able to keep him?

Quick Hitters

- With Jeremiah Smith bursting on the season as a freshman this early season, Emeka Egbuka – who in 2022 had 74 catches for 1,151 yards and 10 touchdowns before being slowed by injury last season – had become kind of a forgotten man, at least among many fans. Forgotten no more after his five catch, 117-yard performance against Marshall that included a 68-yard touchdown burst. Remember, in that 2022 season, Egbuka also ran 11 times for 87 yards (7.9-yard average). How long before Kelly works Egbuka into the rushing rotation?

- Look up the word "mulligan" in the dictionary and it will have a picture of Brandon Inniss. Inniss got his do-over after muffing a punt deep in Ohio State territory, seemingly giving the Thundering Herd the ball at the OSU 16 with Marshall only trailing 14-7. But the Herd was called for an illegal formation on the same play and had to punt again. Inniss handled the kick this time, and on the first play from scrimmage following, Judkins went 86 yards for a touchdown and a 21-7 Buckeye lead.

- Despite the near disaster, it was good to see Inniss back to his aggressive punt-returning ways after a timid performance against Western Michigan. He had a 21-yard return in the third quarter that would have been a lot longer (a possible touchdown?) if he hadn't been tackled by the turf monster with plenty of green space ahead of him.

- Penalties continue to be an issue for the Buckeyes. Their infractions against Marshall were a mixed bag, with one called on Day for unsportsmanlike conduct and Caden Curry being ejected for targeting. In all, the Buckeyes were flagged five times for 54 yards, and they are 60th in the country for fewest penalties with 6.0 per game. Interesting fact: The Buckeyes have been charged with one fewer penalty each game, starting with seven against Akron, six against WMU and five against the Herd. If they maintain that rate, they will be down to zero against Penn State on Nov. 2.

Big Brother C.J.

As many of you may have seen or heard, former Buckeye quarterback C.J. Stroud took some heat after he aggressively offered advice to freshman Chicago Bears quarterback Caleb Williams following his Houston team's 19-13 victory over the Bears on Sept. 15, despite the fact that Stroud has been in the league only one season longer than Williams.

Here's how the L.A. Times described the exchange:

"'Good job out there, stop taking those hits,' Stroud said.

"Williams, who was sacked seven times, took 11 quarterback hits and had two passes intercepted, responded with a blank stare. He began to depart, only to have Stroud grip his shoulder pads and pull him back.

"Stroud, who was a rookie of the year revelation last season, kept the advice flowing, saying, 'Come here. Learn from those mistakes. And everything that you got, bro, is in you already, bro. You're going to be a hell of a player in this league.'"

A couple of days later, Stroud tried to explain his actions.

"I was not trying to little bro him or anything," Stroud told reporters. "He knows that, too. I have a ton of respect for him. I had so many guys coming to me after games last year, and that meant the world to me that those guys even thought about giving me advice."

I thought of this encounter when I was reading our "A Look Back at Recruiting From the Pages of BSB" feature in this issue. Fifteen years ago, future Buckeye quarterback Braxton Miller was in town to watch Ohio State play USC on an unofficial visit.

Miller said he paid particular attention to the play of OSU quarterback Terrelle Pryor, the signal caller he would ultimately replace as a freshman in 2011.

"Terrelle is a great athlete and I can see he's worked on his throwing ability," Miller said. "He's getting some good coaching from Coach (Nick) Sicaliano. The thing I see he needs to keep working on right now is for him to stay in the pocket and not let the defensive ends get him off track."

If Williams was offended by the advice given by Stroud, I wonder how he would have felt if he was critiqued by a kid still in high school?

I wonder if Pryor saw Miller's quotes and what he thought?

Buckeyes Stop A Star

An NFL quarterback who is off to a better start than Williams is Sam Darnold, who has had a checkered pro career at best so far.

Darnold, a former USC star, may have come into his own after taking over as quarterback of the Minnesota Vikings. He led the Vikings to victories in their first three games, including a win over Stroud and the Texans, completing 53 of 78 passes for 476 yards, a 68.0 percentage and eight TDs against two interceptions.

To much fanfare, Ohio State faced Darnold in the Cotton Bowl following the 2017 season. It seems like Darnold had some ups and downs with the Trojans as well. Here is what we wrote about the QB in our Cotton Bowl preview.

"The USC offense is spearheaded by quarterback Sam Darnold. The third-year sophomore is in his second season as the team's starting signal caller and was a preseason favorite to win the Heisman Trophy this year.

"Though he was not a finalist for college football's most prestigious individual award, he has completed 277 of 435 passes (63.7 percent) for 3,787 yards, 26 touchdowns and 12 interceptions through the first 13 games of 2017."

Darnold's reputation had dropped even more by the time the Buckeyes got done with him in a 24-7 Ohio State victory. Here were my thoughts in this space following the OSU win.

"While some might have projected the outcome of the game based on how Buckeye quarterback J.T. Barrett fared vs. USC's Sam Darnold, soon to be a very high pick in the upcoming NFL draft, it ended up being Darnold vs. the OSU defensive line, which harassed him relentlessly, ultimately recording eight sacks.

"The Southern Cal signal caller was so harried that I have to admit that when the game was over, I was surprised that his passing line of 26 completions on 45 attempts for 356 yards was as respectable as it was.

"But how many times have you heard coaches say that games are determined by turnovers? That was certainly the case in the Cotton Bowl as Darnold delivered a pick-six and gave up two fumbles, one of which set up a Buckeye touchdown and the other stifling a promising 70-yard drive – both fumbles were caused by defensive linemen. Trojan wide receiver Deontay Burnett also coughed up the ball on Southern Cal's first possession, allowing the Buckeyes to set the tempo of the game with a short TD drive their first time with the ball."

If you are wondering how Barrett did, he was a quiet 11 of 17 for 114 without a touchdown or an interception. He did pick up 66 yards rushing on

16 carries with two touchdowns. If you are wondering who won the Heisman that year, after Darnold dropped out of contention (he didn't even crack the top 10), it was none other than Baker Mayfield, who had led Oklahoma to a victory over Ohio State earlier in the season, emphasizing the point by planting a Sooner flag on the Ohio Stadium turf.

Corporate Money

Given the way money and fundraising have taken over college football, I can't help but include this note from the same View From 15th & High that covered Darnold and the Cotton Bowl. I still find it amusing.

"I know that corporate sponsorship is now a big part of college football. But if you are going to have a benefactor do the opening coin flip, an actual function of the game that can have an impact on the outcome, can you make sure that person knows what they are doing? The honor at the Cotton Bowl was given to Gail Ewing, whose auto group has provided cars for the game for many years.

"She gently tossed it, not flipped it. As one comment I saw online said, 'USC had more turnovers in the first quarter than the coin did.'

"A flip of the coin is supposed to be an impartial way to start the game. The Trojans got jobbed on this one, but what are you going to do, humiliate a benefactor in front of 67,510 in attendance and a television audience of millions and re-flip it?"

Congratulations, Mark

Another way to potentially embarrass yourself in front of a crowd is to throw out the ceremonial first pitch at a baseball game.

My good friend Mark Warren, vice president of the Triple A Columbus Clippers, recently announced that he will be retiring after 44 years with the club. In recognition of his service, he threw out the first pitch at the final Clippers home game this year on Sept. 15, the final home game of Mark's career. His curve ball had just a little too much break on it, but his catcher prevented it from being scored a wild pitch. I give Mark credit for throwing it from the rubber, as opposed to throwing from in front of the mound, like many who throw out the first pitch do.

Mark has been with the Clippers for as long as I have been with Buckeye Sports Bulletin, and I have known him for all those years, working with him on joint projects for most of them.

He is one of the good guys, and I wish him luck and best wishes in whatever he chooses to do.

Mail Delivery Blues

As mentioned, I have been at this for 44 years, and I don't think I have ever been as discouraged about the mail service as I have in the past few weeks. The overwhelming number of phone calls about tardy delivery has been extremely disheartening, with no end to the phone calls or the delivery problems in sight.

While the Dayton area was the epicenter of problems with the Football Preview issue, the heaviest problem area seems to have shifted to the Warren-Youngstown region in recent weeks. Subscribers have been reporting receiving two editions of BSB on the same day, both late.

Our best suggestion right now to temporarily mitigate the problem is to read the paper online at BuckeyeSports.com until your paper arrives or to upgrade your delivery to first-class mail in an envelope through the Michigan game for just \$26. For information on how to access BuckeyeSports.com, free to all subscribers, or to upgrade to first class, give as a call at (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862.