

OHIO STATE BUCKEYES



OL TYQUAN LEWIS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2016

QUARTERBACKS - JT Barrett (PS#11) was #5 in the '14 Heisman vote (2834, 65%, 34-10, 938 rush, 3rd Tm AA) before being OFY. Cardale Jones (12 gauge) started vs the #2 FBS D in the B10 Title gm, then took on Alabama & Oregon in the playoffs (860, 61%, 7-2, 296 rush). OSU was loaded at QB in '15. Braxton Miller (B10 OPOY '12 & '13) ret'd after a RS but moved to WR and Jones won the job. Despite an offense that was clearly underachieving, Meyer stuck with him for 7 sts (both QB's played). Barrett became the red zone QB vs MD and after Penn St took over the job. He started vs Rut (49 pts ssn high) but was susp vs Minn. Jones struggled vs Minn, threw just 2 pass vs Illinois and DNP the final 3. Barrett threw for only 46 vs Mich St, 113 vs Mich (139 rush) and 211 (96 rush) in the win over ND. Barrett threw for 992 (63.3%, 11-4, #2 rush w/682, 5.9). Jones led the team in passing (1460, 62.5%, 8-5) and was #4DC BUF. Backing up Barrett TY is Joe Burrow (PS#31) who had a great spring game. Stephen Collier (6'4" 225, PS#53) tore his ACL in May and is expected to be OFY. It's addition by subtraction as they lose two NFL DC's (the Miller #3DC HOU) but OSU's QB's had a 36-10 ratio in '14 and only 19-9 LY. They will improve on that in a now one QB system.

RUNNING BACKS - In '14 Ezekiel Elliott (262, 8.7) was the leading returnee but had just 76 yds (20 att) in the first 2 (wrist surg Aug). Elliott did not start vs Illinois but was reborn and avg'd 167 ypg over his L7 including 220 (11.0) vs Wisc, 230 (11.5) vs Alabama and 246 (6.8) vs Ore (1878, 6.9, 220 rec). Last year they added true frosh Mike Weber (PS#10) who was impressive in Aug but RS (knee inj Aug). Elliott had another great year (1821, 6.3) but was not invited to NY (finished 8th Heisman balloting). Curtis Samuel was the #5 rusher (132, 7.8) behind Barrett, Miller and Jones. Weber (215 lbs) fits the Carlos Hyde/Elliott big feature back mold and they add PS#8 Antonio Williams. This is a solid unit but I do not see them matching 2nd Tm AA Elliott's (#1DC DAL) outstanding numbers.

RECEIVERS - Devin Smith (#1 yds, 931, 28.2) emerged as their big play guy in '14 while Michael Thomas (PS#33) led in rec (#2, 799, 14.8, 9 td). Jalin Marshall was #3 (499, 13.1). LY they lost Smith (#2DC), a #6DC WR and a #3 DC TE. Six of the top 7 rec's were back but the major talk in camp was Noah Brown (PS#21) but he was OFY (leg) late Aug. Injuries hurt as they were missing 5 of the top 9 at one point. I was surprised they did not utilize Braxton Miller more after his huge game vs Vtech as he had just 341 (13.1) rec and 260 (6.2) rush. Thomas led with 781 (13.9) and Jalin Marshall was #2 (477, 13.2). TY Thomas (13 st, #2DC NO) and Marshall (11 st, UFA NYJ) both left early for the NFL. Also gone is TE Nick Vannett (12 st, 162,

8.5, #3DC SEA) and Miller (7 st). After ret 2 of the top 3 LY, the top 3 are gone but the production was down last year (top 3 '14, 2229 - '15 1599). There remains 18 VHT's in the group!

OFFENSIVE LINE - In 2014 OSU had an extremely inexp'd O-line (21 car st) losing 4 multi year starters (3 st'd for NFL tms). OL cch Ed Warinner did a great job with an inexp'd unit in '11 and had the same effect (264, 5.7, 28 sk, Nat'l Title). Last year they only lost their RT (76 car ret st). All five OL started all 13 and the numbers were similar (245, 5.6, 19 sk). TY they lose 1st Tm AA LT Taylor Decker (13/42 st, #1DC DET), RT Chase Farris (13/13 st) and C Jacoby Boren (28 st). 2nd Tm AA Pat Elfliet turned down the NFL and Meyer brought in 5 massive VHT's. Sixth man Jamarco Jones (PS#7) also returns. They go from 4 returning starters to 2 (57 car st) but the 2015 version did not match my expectations and this edition of "The Slobs" could be just as good. Warinner now focuses on play-calling and the new OL cch is Greg Studrawa.

DEFENSIVE LINE - LY they lost 2 st's (#6 DC) but ret'd 1st Tm AA Joey Bosa. I called for the trend of being slightly less exp'd but to have improved numbers to continue and they did (127, 3.4, 38 sk). TY they lose Bosa (#1DC SD, 12 st, 51 tkl, 5 sk), DT Adolphus Washington (12 st, 49 tkl, 4 sk, #3DC BUF), DT Tommy Schutt (7 st, 25 tkl, 2.5 sk) and Joel Hale (4 st, 12 tkl). DE Tyquan Lewis led with 8 sks and Sam Hubbard had 6.5 sks as Bosa's bkp and could be this year's AA DL. In the Fiesta Bowl LY all 3 of the now departed DL's were gone by the 2Q (susp, inj, eject) and the line still did well. In Meyer's 1st 4 recruiting classes 18 DL's were signed, 13 RS and only Bosa had more than 12 tkl's as a true. There are still 11 VHT's in the group incl true frosh Nick Bosa (PS#3, Joey's brother).

LINEBACKERS - In '14 Curtis Grant and true frosh Rae-kwon McMillan (PS#1) shared the MLB spot. LY 6 of the top 7 returned incl their #1 (2nd Tm B10 Joshua Perry), #3 (Darron Lee, Sugar Bowl Def MVP) and #9 tkl'r's as the only loss was Grant (15 st, #5 tkl'r). I had them as my #2 LB corps in the nation. OSU went from allowing 22.0 to 15.1 ppg. McMillan led with 119 tkl's and Perry was the #2 tkl'r (3.5 sk, #4DC SD). TY they lose 2nd Tm B10 Lee (13 st, #4 tkl'r, 11 tfl, #1DC NYJ), 1st Tm B10 Perry (13 st) and bkp Cam Williams (12 tkl). McMillan was a Butkus semi finalist and I expect solid years from Dante Booker (PS#6) and Chris Worley. Added to the mix are rFr Justin Hilliard (PS#2) and soph Jerome Baker (PS#10). Replacing 2 star LB's will be tough but they are still loaded with talent.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - Since '97 OSU has had 9 DB's drafted in the 1st Rnd (29 drafted overall). After an unusually weak finish in '13, I noted that they should improve despite the loss of 3 st's. They moved up to #7 in my PDR (56%, 17-25). LY they only lost a 2nd Tm B10 CB (#4DC). They ret'd their #2, #4, #7, #13, & #14 tkl'r's. OSU finished #5 (50.4%, 15-12). TY they lose 2nd Tm B10 CB Eli Apple (13 st, #3 tkl, 8 pbu, #1DC NYG), 1st Tm AA SS Vonn Bell (13 st, #5 tkl'r, 9 pbu, #2DC NO) and S Tyvis Powell (13 st, #3 tkl'r, 3 int). While they'll be solid as usual (10 VHT's), they're not as exp'd as '15.

SPECIAL TEAMS - In '14 true frosh K Sean Nuernberger (PS#11) hit 13-20 fg's (L49). P Cameron Johnston avg 45.1 (41.8 net, Ray Guy semi) while Dontre Wilson & Jalin Marshall were dangerous RM. Meyer emphasizes punt blk's but they had "just" one and dropped to #24 (#9 in '13) in my ST rankings. OSU was a surprising #32 in '15. Johnston avg 43.9 (40.3 net, 26/120). Jack Willoughby (27 TB 85 KO) won the K job (7-11) but Nuernberger took over late and hit all 3 FG's vs ND. LY for the first time in 13 yrs OSU did not have a KR or PR td. TY they only lose Marshall (379, 13.5 PR) and should make a solid climb.

COACHES - Urban Meyer (50-4 record best ever F4Y for a new HC) won the first ever CFB Playoff Nat'l Title. Meyer also

had 2 Nat'l Titles at Fla ('05-'10). After going 22-2 at Utah ('03-'04) and 17-6 at BG ('01-'02), he became the 1st coll HC to tally 3 separate 20 gm win streaks in '13. Luke Fickell (here s/'02) was the interim HC in '11 and has been the DC ever since. Greg Schiano who was HC at Rutgers ('01-'11) and the TB Bucs ('12-'13) is the new co-DC. Ed Warinner is in his 2nd year as OC (OL cch here 4Y) after prior stops for 2Y at ND (OL, run gm coor) and 5Y at Kansas ('03-'04, OC '07-'09). Tim Beck was added as co-OC LY (L7Y Neb, 4 as OC). Kerry Coombs was at Cincinnati from '07-'11 and has been ST coach s/'13.

THIS DECADE 68-12 (85.0%) #3 - Jim Tressel won a Nat'l Title in his 2nd yr ('02) and had eight Top 10 finishes in his final 9 yrs. Ohio St was 102-25 (80.3%) from '00-'09. The Buckeyes had an interim HC in '11 in Luke Fickell (now co-DC) as well as their 1st losing season (-45.5 ypg B10) s/'88 (3rd s/'60). It was surprising that they went to a bowl because the NCAA handed them a 1 year bowl ban and if retroactive, the Buckeyes would have been in the Nat'l Title game in '12. Things were pointing upward in '12 as OSU was my #2 Most Improved team. OSU doubled its win total from 6 to 12-0 (#3). In '13 OSU lost the B10 Title gm to Mich St and then the bowl and finished #12. OSU usually travelled with 61 ply'r's (70 all'd). In 2014 the Bucks only had 10 ret st's then QB Miller was OFY. OSU went from the preseason favorite to win the B10 to being dismissed as a title contender. They were really dismissed when in Wk 2 a young O-line and QB struggled vs VT's blitzing schemes. OSU rallied and beat Wisc 59-0 as a dog in the Big Ten title game with their #3 QB and made the playoffs. They were a dog but upset Alabama & Oregon to get their first Nat'l Title s/'02 with the group being termed "The Super Sophs". LY they lost 1 game but it was one too many and they did not make the playoffs and finished "just" #4.

2015 ANALYSIS 12-1 - OSU was the consensus pre-season #1 team but the juggling of their QB's saw them perform well below their high expectations on a weekly basis despite very few close calls. They lost 17-14 at home in a downpour vs a Mich St team without QB Connor Cook. After blowing out Michigan they whipped ND in the bowl but this time could not overcome that one loss and finished #4.

ALSO ON ROSTER:
QB Justin Cook 6'3" 225 Jr. WR Austin Clutter 6'0" 196 So. DB Trevon Forte 5'8" 175 Jr.
QB Joe Burrow 6'3" 225 Jr. WR Joe Rasmussen 6'3" 225 Sr. DB Cameron Howard 6'1" 203 Sr.
RB Ke'Von Huguley 5'9" 180 So. TE Phillip Silberman 6'0" 230 So. DB Logan Kelleher 6'0" 195 Jr.
RB Patrick Wise 5'10" 205 Jr. TE Guy Ferrell 6'1" 245 Sr. DB CinQuan Haney 6'1" 200 Sr.
RB Delvin McDaniel 5'11" 195 Sr. DB Michael Lawless 6'2" 210 Sr.

PHIL'S FORECAST

OFFENSE - The NFL snapped up 6 Buckeye offensive players including 5 in the first 3 Rnds. While just 3 starters return there still is plenty of talent at the skill spots and I like the O-line. After getting 50+ pts 6 times in '14, they did it 0 times LY and a veteran offense underachieving going from 44.8 ppg to 35.7. Now back to a one QB system they should be at least as potent as LY.

DEFENSE - OSU had 7 st's back on D in '15 and went from allowing 22.0 ppg to 15.1. TY just 3 st's are back and the schedule is tougher. My computer forecasts a slip back to the 2014 level (won a national title that year).

2016 - This year's squad has 6 Sr's, 20 Jr's, 17 soph and 44 frosh. They had the highest defensive ypp in the FBS (20.7) LY (pg 25) and set a record having 9 players selected in the first 3 rounds (Tenn, 8 in 2000 went 11-2 in '01). They draw Wisc & Neb from the West and face Okla, Wisc, Penn St and Mich St on the road. They may be the least exp'd team in the country but still have a lot of talent and are 50-4 in Urban Meyers 4 years. Last year they were the preseason consensus #1 team but did not live up to the hype. This year they may be a bit hungrier, have one clear cut QB and are still my pick to win the Big Ten.

OFFENSE

JERSEY #
IN SCARLET

2016 PROJECTED STARTING LINEUP

DEFENSE

JERSEY #
IN SCARLET

QB 16 JT BARRETT JR. 6-2 225 PS#11. 12 st, 2834 (65%, 34-10), 938 rush (5.5), 3rd Tm AA '14. 5 st, 11 gm, 992 (63%, 11-4), 682 rush (5.9) LY. **10 Joe Burrow** (6'3" 208 rFr) PS#31. Dwayne Haskins (6'3" 204 Fr) PS#6. **RB 20 Mike Weber rFr.** 5-10 215 PS#10. 25 Bri'onte Dunn (6'0" 215 Sr) PS#10. 11 gm, 133 (5.3) true. RS '13. 8 gm, 63 (7.0) '14. 13 gm, 91 (6.5) LY. **8 Antonio Williams** is PS#8. IFS. **35 Alex Backenstoe** (6'1" 205 So) Air Force trans. **HB 4 Curtis Samuel Jr.** 5-11 200 PS#12. 1 st, 383 (6.6), 95 rec (8.6) true. 1 st, 13 gm, 132 (7.8), 289 rec (13.1) LY. 2 Dontre Wilson (5'10" 195 Sr) PS#21. 6 st, 350 (7.1), 573 rec (11.5), 1218 KR (24.4) 3Y. **5 Johnnie Dixon** (5'11" 198 So) LY. **4 Corey Smith Sr.** 6-1 195 PS#11JC. 1 st, 255 (12.8) '14. 4 gm, 62 (12.4) then OFY (leg) LY. **21 Parris Campbell** (6'1" 205 So) PS#23. F/3 st WR, 8 gm LY. **14 KJ Hill** (6'0" 195 Fr) PS#24. **87 Alex Stump** (6'3" 202 Fr) PS#49. **WR 80 Noah Brown So.** 6-2 222 PS#21. 11 gm, 1 rec as true. OFY broken leg LY. **82 James Clark** (5'10" 182 Jr) PS#60. 2 gm '14. 11 gm LY. **73 Terry McLaurin** (6'1" 200 So) PS#34. Torrence Gibson (6'4" 205 rFr) LY. **TE 85 Marcus Baugh Jr.** 6-5 255 PS#10. 5 gm '14. 4 st, 2 rec LY. **88 AJ Alexander** (6'2" 235 Fr) PS#24. Chase Hounshell (6'4" 255 Sr) PS#77. 3 st, 23 gm, 1 rec 5Y at ND. Grad trans '16. **24 Rashod Berry** (6'4" 245 Fr) PS#35. **C 65 PAT ELFLEIN SR.** 6-3 300 PS#80. 1 st RG, 13 gm rFr. 15 st (F/3LG, L/12RG), 1st Tm B10 '14. 13 st RG, 2nd Tm AA LY. **79 Brady Taylor** (6'5" 300 So) PS#84. 4 gm LY. Jack Wohlhabler is PS#57. **RG 54 BILLY PRICE JR.** 6-4 315 PS#30. 15 st (F/3RG, L/12LG) '14. 13 st LG, 2nd Tm B10 LY. **75 Evan Lisle** (6'6" 305 Jr) PS#10. 12 gm LY. **42 Aaron Parry** (6'5" 275 Sr) 9 gm LY. **LS 49 Liam McCullough** (6'2" 210 Fr) PS#2. **LG 73 Michael Jordan Fr.** 6-7 316 PS#17. IFS. **78 Demetrius Knox** (6'4" 305 So) PS#12. 11 gm LY. **56 Matthew Burrell** (6'4" 300 rFr) PS#14. **72 Tyler Gerald** is PS#35. IFS. **69 Brandon Pahl** (6'2" 295 So) DNP LY. **RT 59 Isaiah Prince So.** 6-7 305 PS#13. 9 gm true. Malcolm Pridgeon (6'8" 328 Jr) PS#4JC. 1st Tm JCAA LY. **76 Brandon Bowen** (6'7" 320 rFr) PS#142. **77 Kevin Feder** (6'9" 305 rFr) PS#88. LS Aaron Mawhirter (6'1" 230 Sr). **LT 74 Jamarco Jones Jr.** 6-5 310 PS#7. 4 gm bkp as true. 12 gm LY. Tough, physical. **71 Kyle Trout** (6'6" 310 So) PS#34. RS '14. DNP LY. **63 Kevin Woidke** (6'6" 310 So) W/O and DNP LY. Blake Pfennig (6'5" 305 So). **K 96 SEAN NUERNBERGER JR.** 6-1 220 PS#11. 15 gm, 13-20 fg, L/49, 89-89 PAT (OSU rec true '14, 3-4 fg, L/38, 17-17 PAT LY. **30 Tyler Durbin** (6'3" 200 Sr) DNP LY. **98 Dominic Garriss** (5'11" 180 Jr). **29 Alex Craft** (6'1" 220 Fr).

