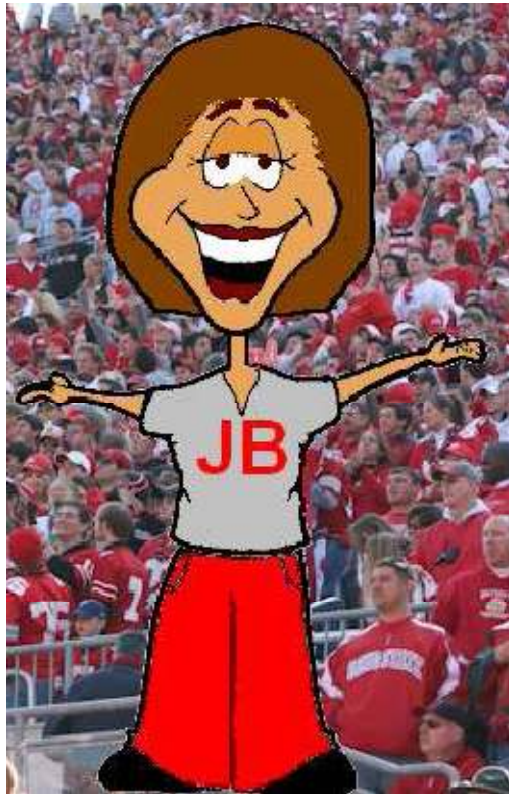


JENNY BUCKS

09/23/07



Greetings from Sunny C-Bus:

The good thing about the media when little is expected of you and the conference is down is that you don't have to hear Mark May mutter on and on about this and that Buckeye ... and Lou Holtz, well he's always entertaining because I'm not sure sometimes that he's not on the edge between senility or insanity and genius ...

And that's a nice lead into the defense ... I'm not sure that it is genius, per se, but certainly there is a consistency in the first and second rotation and that is one of physicality and pain ... inflicted on the opponent. The hits were hard enough yesterday to hear up in my 14C, row 20 seats. The defensive game plan all this season seems to be one of aggressiveness - these silver bullets are on a mission. Yesterday was another stellar performance by James Laurinaitis - I ask anyone who's rational to find a better linebacker in college football. In abbreviated play, James had 7 tackles, 1 TFL, 5 were solo. Vernon Gholston also had one of his best games

- he got his first touchdown EVER on the scoop following the powerful hit put on CJ Bacher by Anderson Russell. And as I've said before it is so great to see Russell playing well after suffering the season-ending injury last year at Iowa. Frankly outside of Laurinaitis, the backups ended up leading in the tackling statistical categories - Laurinaitis was followed in the tally by Jamario O'Neal and true freshman corner Eugene Clifford with 6 a piece.

The defense played great - no doubt. It would have probably been a bit more of a test had Tyrell Sutton been available. Per the postgame presser, Fitzgerald said that in the pre-game warm-up, it just wasn't happening (the ankle). So what is in doubt about this defense is how good the opponents have been thus far ... and looking at the upcoming opponents, who is really going to test our D? I was thinking Purdue's Painter till I saw part of that dismal Minnie-PU contest last night. Unless Henne returns to the lineup, Michael Hart, while he is UM's heart and soul, is going to be so banged up carrying the ball 44 times per game that I don't think it will be as tough a game as I had anticipated at the beginning of the season because Mallett is not being asked to do much. If Henne returns and he can get the ball in the vicinity of Manningham, that's a better test. And then, what happened to PSU? And then Wisky's got some talent but their QB is young, and really looked young against Iowa last night. Iowa has probably got a decent D but then they lost to Iowa St. who's no overhouse. MSU's got a new QB also, but Ringer is an exciting back.

On offense, it started out as the Boeckman to Robiskie show - Robo had 3 catches, all for TD's. Robo has a streak of some 25 games I believe with a catch. Robo led all receivers with 89 yards. With Sanzenbacher out with a concussion, Ray Small rejoined the rotation in the slot and got a 48 yard TD pass from Boeckman. And Boeckman overall had a nice outing - 11 of 14, 179 yards, 4 TD passes, 1 INT, the latter was much like a punt in giving NW very poor field position. Hartline got 2 balls as did Rory Nicol.

The Bucks are a bit banged up on the offense - true freshman Brandon Saine missed the game having had a knee procedure earlier in the week - apparently he could return next week against Minnie (doubt they'll need him). Beanie after hitting his 100 yards for the 3rd week in a row re-injured his tender ankle and went out. He said after the game that it was nothing to worry about and that he could have returned. Initially, the trainers cut off the tape and iced it down but by the end of the game, he was back in his

shoe and just keeping it elevated without the ice. Beanie had just 12 carries but hit his 100 yards and scored 1 TD in a nice dash for endzone. As a result, Mo Wells got the bulk of the carries – 15 - for 44 yards and scored 2 TDs. Mo also caught 2 balls for 8 yards. He's nice in space where he can really accelerate but if he were to be relied upon, the coaches would really have to game plan around getting him the ball in a true spread or the often tried new formation coming out of Nevada called the pistol where the tailback lines up behind the QB to give him more acceleration to the line. That would require the OL to hold their blocks a bit longer as well. I thought the OL did a reasonable job - Jake Ballard at the TE spot is really emerging in the blocking area - note they often go his direction or pull a guard in his direction in advance of a Beanie or Mo or Brandon to clear out some space out wide. But Boeckman did get some good hits and I never like to see the QB get hit ... nor does Todd I'm sure.

One area the Bucks need to work on desperately is special teams: specifically kickoff coverage and the snap-placement on the point-after/field goals. While I thought overall the kickoff coverage looked better - and with that many scores, we did a lot of execution of that play yesterday - they still let the one TD out to start the second half. In any other setting, an opponent can really turn on the momentum with a play like that. But I did see some improved coverage – true freshman Brian Rolle made an impact - literally - on Sherrick McManis, NW's returner and he had a great block for Ray Small on a punt return. He also got some decent minutes at LB in the 2nd half. He looks to be solid. I don't think we have concerns on our return squads either - both punt return and kick returns look solid. The long snap-placement thing went awry again this week. That needs to be ironed out in Tressel-ball. Trapasso had but one punt and it was a pooch - doesn't help his average but he's executing just fine.

Someone commented on morning radio that this squad reminds them of 2002 squad - I think frankly they are a bit ahead. The D looks better to me this season, especially the cover corners where we were forced in '02 to let Chris Gamble go both ways because the cupboard was bare. This year, Chimdi Chekwa, who got a nice pick yesterday, has come on nicely. Donald Washington is tackling better and Malcolm Jenkins is nothing but not solid. Anderson Russell, Kurt Coleman and Jenkins all play safety very capably.

The LBs look solid - Laurinaitis is very solid, probably ahead of Matt Wilhelm though not as experienced. And there's tons of depth. There isn't yet an Anderson among the DT's yet but Denlinger is doing a very solid job. There's probably not a Will Smith - I think Wilson could have been that but he's lost for the season. Doug Worthington though looks very solid, Vernon Gholston is solid and Robert Rose/Cameron Heywood are making huge strides, particularly Iron-head's kid who is very disruptive on the edge but still has a tendency to overrun the play just a tad. On the O side, I do see the similarity between Boeckman and Krenzel - Boeckman might have the better arm for the long ball but both start a bit slow, may have a few off target. The RB corps is similar though without the ego/enigma that was that squad's MO C. I think that OL might have been a bit more solid but I think we might be a bit ahead on the WR corps, clearly deeper this year. I don't think that the special teams are as reliable right now for kick scoring but punting and return yards are probably comparable. Anyway, it was a fun exercise.

A few fun notes ... Yesterday's game was the 500th played in the Horseshoe. The Bucks' first game was played before a crowd of under 25,000, scaring the likes of Lynn St John who put his reputation on the line to build the monstrosity that was Ohio Stadium back in those days. The Bucks took on Ohio Wesleyan and won. The following week, the Bucks hosted UM in the dedication event and everyone sighed a big sigh of relief when 72,500 showed up. The stadium wasn't entirely finished and many fans had to stand for the contest. Yesterday's attendance was supposedly the 12th highest in history. Hard to tell - many were gone by halftime both due to the blow-out and due to the heat (it was 86 degrees).

The 1942 team was honored at halftime - or what is left of them. Bill Willis was in the best shape of the bunch as far as looking incredibly fit and ready to put the pads on and he's got to be 85-88 years-old range. He looked incredible!

Thad Matta and what he called perhaps one of the finest back courts to ever play at OSU were also recognized at half time - Scoonie Penn and Michael Redd. While their final four of 1999 has been erased, Thad wanted to let them know how great it has been to have them as a friend of the program and gave them autographed basketballs from last year's team. Redd is frequently back for games - he has business interests in the Columbus-area.

Thad is also the recipient of a new contract deal. You will recall that they re-did his contract last year, taking him to \$2 million per year and adding a year to his contract. He got a \$480,000 per year raise taking him to nearly \$2.5 million and an extension through 2016. Matta is second behind MSU's Tom Izzo in compensation in the Big 10. What is also worrisome is his health - he had 2 back surgeries during the summer and is walking with a leg brace. Apparently he has limited feeling in one of his legs. He says he will be ready for patrolling the sidelines by the end of October when practice begins - I hope so.

Next Saturday, the Bucks travel to Minneapolis for perhaps their final appearance in the Metrodome. The Bucks are undefeated in the Metrodome, by the way. I don't want to discount any opponent but ... the game is an evening kickoff as is the following week's appearance in West Lafayette before returning to the fine confines of the 'Shoe.

GO BUCKS from JennyBucks!