Near-Tragic Experience Remembered By Ohioans

12-31-30
By Andi Gates
Of the Dispatch Staff

When the big blue and orange United Airlines DC-8 touched down at Port Columbus Airport Tuesday, Sue Tracy cried.

Mrs. Tracy and her husband, Jack, 304 E. Schrock Rd., Westerville, were among 238 passengers and 11 crew members evacuated Monday night when the landing gear on their charted jetliner collapsed before takeoff at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

The Tracys, both Ohio State University graduates, and 227 other OSU alumni, administrators, faculty and their families returned Tuesday about 4:25 p.m. aboard a second chartered DC-8 aircraft.

THE PASSENGERS, who slid down evacuation chutes and scrambled over the plane's wings to escape a fire in the landing gear at Phoenix, were relieved to be home.

Many still felt the pain of injuries — bumps, bruises and scrapes suffered during evacuation — which hospitalized two passengers in Phoenix and a third on arrival in Columbus. All shared the memory of a near tragedy.

"We could see the flames out our window," said Beverly Rowles of Pleasantville, Ohio. "It was the kind of fear where I thought: Would we make it out? Would there be an explosion?"

Mrs. Rowles and her children, Dianne, 11, and Keith, 18, fled through emergency exits over the wing. Her husband, Edward, slid down a chute.

"THAT'S AS close as I ever want to see a calamity. With those flames coming up, it could have been a disaster," Rowles said.

The incident occurred about 7:45 p.m. EST, as the plane was taxiing to the runway. A beam on the plane's right landing gear collapsed. Friction ignited a tire and started a fire in the landing well, United spokesman Irv Cuevas said in Los Angeles.

When the evacuation order was given, blond-haired, 21-month-old Amy Heinlen was grabbed by her father Daniel L. Heinlen, OSU's director of alumni affairs.

"We went for the slide, just like at the state fair," he said.

THE TODDLER was among several youngsters traveling with their families aboard the OSU Alumni Association's chartered flight to last Friday's Fiesta Bowl game.

Heinlen's second daughter, Kate Kozlowski, 10, escaped with her mother, Gelene, while Heinlen helped injured Edwin M. Crawford, whom he found crawling under the belly of the plane.

Crawford, OSU vice president for public affairs, and Frederic Beekman, OSU director of recreation and intramural sports, remained behind at Phoenix's St. Luke's Hospital.

Crawford, 51, of 2338 Tremont Rd., suffered fractures in his right ankle and right leg.

BEEMANN, 59, 1086 Shady Hill Dr., was being treated for a fractured right jaw and a broken wrist. Both underwent surgery Tuesday and were listed in stable condition Tuesday night.

Beekman's wife remained with him. At least four other passengers left Phoenix Monday night on other flights.

Arthur Strand, 66, of 6830 Woodview Ct., Reynoldsburg, was strapped into a wheelchair after landing in Columbus and taken by ambulance to University Hospital where he was admitted for observation. Strand, who said he suffered back injuries and a broken finger, was released Tuesday night.

Jeri Meeker, 45, of 3050 Greenvale Dr., Worthington, was treated in Phoenix for what she thought was a broken left arm. "But it was just bruised," she said on arrival.

MRS. MEEKER, wife of David Meeker, director of OSU's school of music, said she fell on the tarmac when she slid down the chute with her small carry-on suitcase.

Many passengers praised the United personnel for their professionalism and cool response to the incident.

"Everyone stayed fairly calm. The crew was a super bunch of people and they made it a lot easier," said Wally Wright, of Shelby, Ohio.

Wright, a 1960 OSU graduate, was with his wife, Ann, and children Jane, 13, Betty, 11, and Lisa, 6.

LISA THOUGHT the chute "was fun." She said she wasn't scared and wouldn't mind doing it again.

Most passengers stayed Monday night at the Arizona Biltmore Hotel in Phoenix. United paid for all accommodations and meals and for medical care the injured received, according to Gwen Weaver, acting city manager for United at Port Columbus.
Emergency Mishandled, Doctor Says

Emergency officials at Phoenix, Ariz., are trying to “whitewash the mishandling of a ‘potential tragedy’ after an airplane fire there, an Ohio State University vice president charged Wednesday.

Part of the landing gear of the jetliner chartered by an OSU alumni group collapsed at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport Monday, causing a fire. The group had attended the Fiesta Bowl football game.

The 238 passengers and 11 crew members were evacuated via emergency doors. During the evacuation some of the passengers suffered injuries, including several fractures.

TWO OF THE MOST seriously injured were Edwin Crawford, 51, OSU vice president for public affairs who suffered a right ankle fracture, and Frederic Beckman, OSU director of recreation and intramural sports who suffered fractures of a wrist and jaw. They remained in a Phoenix hospital while the rest of the passengers returned to Columbus Tuesday afternoon.

Dr. Henry Cramblett, vice president for the OSU Office for Health Services, was on the plane and treated some of the injured. He expressed his criticism of the emergency medical treatment after returning to Columbus Tuesday.

Cramblett said he has written to the doctor in charge of care at Maricopa County General Hospital in Phoenix, assailing handling of the injured passengers. Cramblett said he wrote the critique only after the Phoenix doctor requested it.

Cramblett said he “sensed confusion, uncertainty and indecision” during the rescue effort.

“We were sitting on a potential tragedy and they acted improperly,” he said of emergency officials.

But the emergency officials defended their actions. James Kitchel, Phoenix assistant aviation director, said, “My information is that the rescue went very, very well.”

Chief Wesley Powell of the Phoenix Fire Department’s Division of Emergency Medical Services said reports show 19 emergency medical technicians were on the scene in two minutes, along with 120 people being rescued by airport tower personnel. Within eight minutes, 30 fire department rescue workers were on the scene.

He added, “We called a ‘major medical emergency’ less than five minutes after the initial call was received.”

TOM DEPUY, general manager of the ambulance service which picked up the injured, said the fire department called his company at 4:25 p.m. and the first ambulance was at the airport four minutes later. Three other ambulances summoned later by the fire department arrived at the scene within six to seven minutes, Depuy asserted.

Cramblett said the Phoenix officials were “trying to do a whitewash on this.” He then detailed the series of events that led to his criticism.

He said immediately after the accident a disaster emergency was called and then canceled.

“They called it off without information on the nature of the injuries,” he said.

There was dense smoke and no one knew what happened before the all-out emergency was called off. That emergency effort would have summoned nurses and physicians from a nearby hospital, he said.

CRAMBLETT SAID more than a half hour passed before Crawford received attention for his injuries, and during that time the victim was in severe pain. He said Crawford was not transported to a hospital a mile away until an hour after the incident.

“I call that inexcusable. In Ohio, he would have been at the hospital in 20 minutes. I think we tested their disaster plans and found them wanting,” Cramblett said. “An incredible period of time went by before the paramedics arrived — about 20 minutes.” He added that ambulances did not arrive for 10 minutes.

Cramblett said a police officer refused to call an ambulance until the paramedics arrived, and after they arrived they refused to give him a splint so he could treat Crawford. He said Crawford was not transported until he personally — as a physician — ordered it.

“If there was a large number of injuries there was no way they could have handled it,” he said.
Fiesta profits split with Big Ten

By Dave Biros

Ohio State may have done the work to go to the Fiesta Bowl, but even Northwestern will profit from the Buckeyes’ success.

According to Big Ten Conference rules, any money left over from a bowl share after expenses are taken out must be divided equally among the other nine teams.

“There will always be weaker teams in the conference, and in all fairness to them, it provides them with some added income,” said Peter Hagan, associate business manager for the Athletic Department.

However, this rule is only applicable if the money offered by a bowl is more than $750,000. Anything less than that may be kept by the participating team.

Douglas Clay, business manager for the Athletic Department, said if a team in the Big Ten is going to a bowl, a budget is proposed that will cover the cost of the trip. The band, the official party (the university president and other representatives), the families of the coaches and staff, and the team are all included.

The budget is then divided into subcategories such as transportation costs and hotel costs. After that, the budget must be approved by all the Big Ten athletic directors.

The money given to the band was about average compared to the money given to other Big Ten bands, Clay said. Hagan said the Athletic Department likes to see the band go to the bowl games. “They’re one of the best bands in the country and a lot of people like to see our band.”

Madison Scott, secretary of the Board of Trustees and also chairperson of the Ohio State Bowl Committee, said university officials have a responsibility to attend bowl games to represent the university. “I thought it was an excellent opportunity for OSU to enhance its prestige,” he said. “All in all, as a group, we represented the university in an excellent manner.”

The Fiesta Bowl gave Ohio State a share of $900,000, from which OSU proposed a budget of $733,000. Of this money, $160,000 went to the band, $77,000 went to the official party, $99,000 went to the families of the coaches and staff, and $397,000 went to the team.

“When you go to a major bowl like we did, you can do it and still treat the team to a nice hotel,” said Hagan. “It’s a nice reward.”

This left $167,000 to divide among the Big Ten schools, or $16,700 for each school.

In the case of the Rose Bowl, which paid $5 million to Illinois, the money must be divided 11 ways, with the eleventh share paying for expenses of the Big Ten Conference office itself. The Sugar Bowl gave $1.8 million to the University of Michigan, and the Gator Bowl gave Iowa $650,000. Iowa is the only team in the Big Ten that can keep all of its bowl money, since it was less than the $750,000 limit.

Hagan said the schools will not receive their shares from these bowls until early April.
OHIO STATE 03-12-23 Fiesta Bowl week features numerous Ohio State events

Ohio State News

December 23, 2003
Contact: Shannon Wingard
Columbus (Dec. 23-24, 29) - (614) 247-6821
Arizona (Dec. 30-Jan. 3) - (614) 620-1621

Fiesta Bowl week features numerous Ohio State events
Community-service project is set for Dec. 31 in Phoenix, Ariz.

COLUMBUS - The Ohio State University and Kansas State University are putting their football rivalry aside to offer helping hands to hundreds of homeless people in the Phoenix, Ariz., area as a part of a community service initiative. This Ohio State tradition is one of numerous events scheduled during the Fiesta Bowl week, Dec. 30, 2003, through Jan. 3, 2004.

This year, members of the Ohio State and Kansas State communities will help prepare and serve food to between 800 and 1,000 homeless people. The group from Ohio State will
arrive at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 31, at the St. Vincent de Paul Memorial Dining Room, 119 S. 9th Ave., in Phoenix, Ariz. Food will be served from 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. In the past, more than 600 people from Ohio State have volunteered in communities surrounding bowl games. President Holbrook will be available to speak with media at 10 a.m.

Other Fiesta Bowl events include the Fiesta Bowl Parade and Buckeye Bash, which features Coach Jim Tressel, football players, cheerleaders and the Ohio State University Marching Band.

In Tempe, media are invited to cover the Marching Band's final rehearsal before performing in the Fiesta Bowl's halftime show. The rehearsal will be from 9 to 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 1, 2004, at Tempe High School, 1730 South Mill Ave., in Tempe, Ariz. Additional information about the band's trip to the Fiesta Bowl is at http://www.osuband.org/

Events in Arizona during the Fiesta Bowl week include:

**Wednesday, Dec. 31**
**10 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Community Service at the Fiesta Bowl**
St. Vincent de Paul Memorial Dining Room
119 S. 9th Ave. - Phoenix, Ariz.
As a part of Ohio State's commitment to outreach and engagement and as a way to show appreciation, the university has organized a service opportunity for members of the Ohio State community attending the Fiesta Bowl. This is the fifth time Ohio State has taken part in a service project to coincide with a bowl game.

**11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Fort McDowell Fiesta Bowl Parade**
Central Avenue - Phoenix, Ariz.
President Holbrook, the Marching Band and Ohio State cheerleaders will take part in the parade.

7 p.m. - Marching Band - Short Parade and Pep Rally
Tempe Tostitos Fiesta Bowl Block Party
North on Mill Avenue ending in Tempe Beach Park

Thursday, Jan. 1, 2004
9 to 11:30 a.m. Band - Marching and Playing Rehearsal
Tempe High School Stadium
1730 South Mill Ave. in Tempe
More than 1,000 people attended last year's rehearsal.

2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Buckeye Bash
Tempe Diablo Stadium
2200 Alameda Drive in Tempe
3:30 p.m. Marching Band performance
Annual bowl gathering of Buckeye faithful with Coach Tressel, players, cheerleaders and the band.

9:30 p.m. - Marching Band performance - Fiesta Bowl National (H.S.) Band Championship
Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix

Friday, Jan. 2
3 to 4 p.m. - Marching Band performance - Pre-game Party
Arizona State University Festival Grounds, North Stadium Lot

5:45 p.m. - Marching Band - Pre-game Performance - Tostitos Fiesta Bowl
Band Halftime with the Kansas State Band

6 p.m. Fiesta Bowl kickoff
Contacts:
Ohio State Marching Band
The Band will be staying at the Fiesta Inn, 2100 S. Priest Drive in Tempe, Ariz.: (480) 967-1441
Columbus - Steinbrenner Band Center in Columbus, (614) 292-2598
Tempe - Band director Jon Woods at the Fiesta Inn, (480) 967-1441
Contact - David Carwile, (614) 323-4046 (cell)

Community Service at the Fiesta Bowl
St. Vincent Depaul Society, 119 S. 9th Ave. in Phoenix, Ariz.,
(602) 495-3065
http://www.stvincentdepaul.net
Contact - Shannon Wingard, (614) 620-1621 (cell)

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OSU Faculty Experts guide is online at
http://www.osu.edu/news_db/experts_index.php
“Best Damn Team In the Land…”

OHIO STATE

Shocks Miami To Win the National Title

PLUS:
The Top 10 Teams Next Season

Quarterback Craig Krenzel leads the Buckeyes to their first championship in 34 years.
"The Best Damn Team..."

WINS THE BIG ONE

Underdog Ohio State stunned mighty Miami in a two-overtime thriller to win its first national championship since 1968.
BY AUSTIN MURPHY

If you listened closely, you could hear it calling out: Pop my cork—you’ve earned it! Someone had left a bottle of Moët in the ice bucket in Room 6414 of the Princess Resort in Scottsdale, Ariz. Even as the hundreds of Ohio State fans at the hotel—and the rest of the red-clad horde that had descended by the tens of thousands on the Valley of the Sun for the Fiesta Bowl—swung into full party mode, neither Will Smith nor Darrion Scott seemed much interested in champagne.

“It hurts to move,” Smith said. Like Scott, he was a starting defensive end for the Buckeyes. Like Scott, he was too banged-up and exhauster, physically and emotionally, to celebrate Ohio State’s 31–24 victory over heavily favored Miami in the most dramatic title game in the five-year history of the Bowl Championship Series. So the two teammates remained in attitudes of abject fatigue—Smith sprawled on the sofa, Scott curled up on his bed, watching a comedian named Cocoa Brown on BBT—casting their minds back several hours to the goal line stand that had ended one of college football’s greatest games.

Six feet stood between the Hurricanes and a chance to extend the game to a third overtime, their winning streak to 35 games and their reign as national champions to two years. It was first-and-goal at the two, and Miami must have liked its chances. In Ken Dorsey the Hurricanes had a senior quarterback with a 35–1 record. In Andre Johnson and Roscoe Parrish they had two wideouts ticketed for the NFL. In Kellen Winslow they had a tight end who had outplayed everyone else on the field. On top of all that, they had an offensive line touted as among the finest in the land. But the Buckeyes also had this small problem. “Their offensive line was overrated,” said Ohio State linebacker Matt Wilhelm.

“They couldn’t move the ball on the ground against us,” said Scott after the game. “We knew it, and they knew we knew it.”

The Buckeyes’ defense disrupts by sending Krenzel, the game’s leading rusher, got the Buckeyes rolling with this quarterback sneak in the second quarter.

At a meeting of the Hurricanes’ linemen and receivers four days before the Fiesta Bowl, they seemed acutely aware of the dangers they faced. “The key is on the back side,” said offensive coordinator Rob Chudzinski as the players watched video of themselves working against their scout team, which was running the Buckeyes’ schemes. The Christmas tree standing next to the screen somehow failed to lend the room a festive atmosphere. “Somewhere along the line we’ve got to seal off the back side.”

“If that guy slants,” said offensive line coach Art Kehoe, pointing at a defensive end, “that’s who you get, right, ‘Los?’ Staring left tackle Carlos Joseph nodded uncertainly. The session went on in that vein for half an hour.

Photograph by Bob Rosato
“If we can get a body on a body, the ball will get through the line,” said Romberg after the meeting, “but if people are tentative and second-guess, those guys will wipe right over the top of us.”

And so it came to pass. It wasn’t as if the Hurricanes didn’t know what was coming. They were simply powerless to stop it. Smith sacked Dorsey on Miami's first play from scrimmage. The Buckeyes got him three more times and knocked him down on 10 other occasions. (Dorsey, who left the field for one play during the final overtime after a hard hit from Wilhelm, vomited on the Hurricanes’ bus after the game and was hospitalized for several hours with dehydration and a possible concussion.) By the middle of the second quarter Miami had abandoned its man-blocking schemes on passing downs and resorted to slide-protection. This was a stunning concession to a defensive line that it could not handle.

Nor could the Hurricanes get anything going on the ground. Before he left the game in the fourth quarter with torn ligaments in his left knee, Miami tailback Willis McGahee—who rushed for 1,686 yards and averaged 6.4 per attempt during the season—had carried 20 times for just 67 yards. Now, on first-and-goal in the second overtime, his replacement, Jarrett Payton (son of the late Walter Payton), scratched out a yard. On second down Dorsey had tight end Eric Winston open in the end zone, but, feeling pressure from Cane Busters Big plays such as a 57-yard catch by Gamble (7) and Clarett’s stripping of Taylor (left) stunned Miami.

his left, rushed the throw. Incomplete. On third down the Hurricanes ran fullback Quadrine Hill into the line. No imagination, no gain.

In the Ohio State huddle safety Mike Doss sought calm. “Everyone, get your composure,” said the senior All-America, who had toyed with the idea of entering the draft after last season but foresaw great things for this Buckeyes squad and stuck around. (So focused was Doss on getting to the title game that every Monday night for a year he made himself a taco salad, one of whose ingredients was always Tostitos, a superstitious nod to the sponsor of the bowl in which he hoped to finish his career.) “This is our season right here.”

From the sideline came the signal for a blitz called Tight Will Tulsa. “That means I’m coming off the edge,” explained outside linebacker Cie Grant. “I’m bringing the juice.”
Grant, a converted cornerback with serious closing speed, caught Dorsey with one arm, grabbed him by the collar and spun him around as he released a desperation throw. When that homely pass fluttered to the turf, it brought down the curtain on a nascent Hurricanes dynasty. The Miami quarterback sank to his knees while the celebration erupted around him.

Hadn't we just seen this movie? The first overtime had ended, and so it had seemed, with a failed throw from Ohio State quarterback Craig Krenzel. His fourth-down pass to flanker Chris Gamble had fallen incomplete and been followed by a spectacular display of Fiesta Bowl-sponsored pyrotechnics, a tidal wave of Hurricanes players and supporters flowing onto the field, and a yellow flag thrown by back judge Terry Porter, who waited four Mississippis before reaching for his back pocket because, he later explained, he wanted to go over the play in his mind (page 86). Three plays after the pass-interference penalty, Krenzel sneaked the ball in for the tying touchdown.

"They let us play all day," said an incredulous Mark Sprots, Miami's secondary coach, "then he makes a tough call. Who are these guys?"

Divine agents, some Buckeyes would argue. "That was just God giving us another chance," said Scott of the last flag. It was now 2:30 in the morning, and the line was sitting up in bed, fully awake, periodically rubbing his ailing left shoulder. Scott suspected he had a torn labrum—he'd torn his right labrum in 2001, and this felt the same. Faced with a 6 a.m. flight, he'd given up on the idea of getting some sleep, and when Smith, who had taken a helmet to his right quadriceps, limped across the room to hand him a glass of the now-opened bubbly, Scott did not refuse.

Like Scott and Smith, both of whom, it bears mentioning, are of legal drinking age, let us raise a glass, this time to the coaches—to Miami's Larry Coker, who endured his first loss in two seasons at the helm with class and composure, and to Jim Tressel, who in his second season at Ohio State awakened a sleeping giant and delivered to the Buckeyes their first national championship since 1968. Tressel's style is quaint and retro: Players must memorize one another's names and the words to the school fight song Carmen Ohio, which they are required to sing while standing before the band following each game. (In the joyous anarchy on the field after the Fiesta Bowl, there was Buckeye defensive tackle Shane Olivea, herding his teammates toward the end zone: "Coach says we can't do anything before we sing").

Tressel's philosophy is simple. He insists on superior special teams, relentless defense and mistake-free offense. It is also effective. It worked for his father, Lee Tressel, at Baldwin-Wallace, where he won the Division III crown in 1978. It worked for Jim at Youngstown State, where he led the Penguins to four Division I-AA titles between 1991 and '97. Last Friday night it worked on college football's biggest stage, in "a game for the history books," as Ohio State free safety Will Allen described the contest to his teammates before the first overtime.

But this 15-round heavyweight bout left

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**Fiesta Bowl**

**An Early Look Ahead**

Who will contend for the title in 2003? Here's our pre-season Top 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM, RECORD</th>
<th>RETURNING STARTERS</th>
<th>SKINNY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ohio State (14-0)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Why not?</strong> Three veterans from a hard-hitting defensive front are ready to take over as team leaders from departing linebacker Matt Wilhelm and safety Mike Doss. On offense the Buckeyes will be dangerous, with All-1 stars returning, including steady quarterback Craig Krenzel and dazzling running back Maurice Clarett. Expect a team of equal talent and with the passing attack likely to improve with experience—better offensive balance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Oklahoma (12-2)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Injuries set the Sooners back this season, but they're ready to make a title run. Ten members of the late-blooming defense return, including standout linebackers Teddy Lehman and Lance Mitchell and tackle Tommie Harris. The continuing concern is whether Oklahoma can win a title with Nate Hybl behind center.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Miami (12-1)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>So the Hurricanes stand to lose a dozen or so players to the NFL—since when did that suck the wind from their sails? The offense will still be potent. Florida transfer Brock Berlin should already replace quarterback Ken Dorsey. To back options: Rummell Woods; Even if Willis McGahee is still on the mend from knee surgery, Frank Gore, the preseason starter, could set up this season with an ACC tear; could bring every bit as much to the table. Defensively, the secondary should be the nation's best.</td>
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<td>4. Georgia (13-1)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Quarterback David Greene loses only Terrence Edwards from a deep receiving group, and while the departure of offensive linemen Jon Stinchcomb and Kevin Breedlove could leave the team vulnerable early, their successors have studied under the best. The defense, led by end David Pollack, should be a dominating unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Texas (10-2)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>End Cory Redding and cornerback Rod Bocas leave, but the team is a strong defense remains. There will be a heated battle to replace Chris Simms, but whoever starts at quarterback will have the luxury of throwing to Roy Williams and handing off to Cedric Benson.</td>
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<td>6. Kansas State (8-2)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>With the team's best player, cornerback Terence Newman, gone, linebacker Terry Pierce will anchor a young but talented defense. The offense will lean on the rushing game as run-threat quarterback Eli Roberson and running back Daron Sproles return.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Virginia Tech (10-4)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>The offense will be stronger. Quarterback Bryan Randall will get a push from Michael Vick's little brother, Marcus, and tailback Kevin Jones will be the Man after sharing the ball with Le'Veon. A swarming, athletic defense returns nine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. USC (11-2)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>This ranking is a nod to the momentum that seems to be building under coach Pete Carroll. The Trojans must contend with the loss of Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Carson Palmer, two stellar running backs and safety Troy Polamalu. But USC has a star in receiver Mike Williams and an abundance of young talent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Florida State (9-3)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>With an older, hopefully wiser Chris Rix at quarterback and returnees like top receiver Anquan Boldin and star linebacker Michael Boulware and Kendrell Pope, the Seminoles still have plenty of talent. The big question is whether coach Bobby Bowden can instill more spirit and drive than this year's team showed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Virginia (9-5)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>The Cavaliers boast an abundance of young talent that came of age at the end of the season. Eleven freshmen earned starting positions, led by Darryl Blackstock (LB), D'Brickashaw Ferguson (0T) and Heath Miller (TE). Others to look out for: Maryland (11-3), Notre Dame (10-3), Auburn (9-4), Washington (7-6), N.C. State (7-3), Penn State (9-4), Pittsburgh (9-4) and Oregon (7-6). —Kelley King</td>
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some Buckeyes too drained for euphoria. "It just doesn’t feel that big," tailback Maurice Clarett said on the field after the game, as teammates showered each other with corn chips. "It feels like winning another game. Know what I mean? I’m ready to go. Ready to go home." Then, to a teammate: "This s—be too long."

It was indeed a long week for the freshman who had been the Buckeyes’ most potent weapon during the season. Fifteen minutes into a routine press conference on Dec. 30, Clarett dropped one of the bombshells for which he is quickly becoming known. "I’m kind of messed up now," he said. "My friend had a funeral today at 11 o’clock, and they didn’t put me on a plane to go back. So I’m kind of salty." For the next two days he and the school sparred in the press over whether Clarett had filled out the proper forms for the travel assistance the NCAA makes available to players in family emergencies.

Clarett’s coaches and teammates offered condolences for his loss, sympathy for his frustration at missing the funeral and bemused shrugs at his decision to air them so publicly. "There’s no question he’s a team player," said Krenzel. "His heart’s in the right place."

Clarett himself has a knack for being in the right place. Despite being bottled up much of the time by the Hurricanes’ defense, which held him to 47 yards on 23 carries (he had rushed for 1,490 yards and averaged 6.0 per carry this season), Clarett found ways to leave his mark on the game. Every bit as important as his two rushing touchdowns was the defensive play he made in the third quarter. After Miami safety Sean Taylor had picked off Krenzel in the Hurricanes’ end zone, Clarett stripped Taylor of the ball on the return, leading to a Buckeyes field goal.

That outrageous sequence was the signature play of a game in which emotions, and momentum, whipsawed. Whenever the tension seemingly could not be ratcheted any higher, it was. After enduring two Ohio State timeouts with :03 left in regulation, Miami kicker Todd Sievers drilled a 40-yard field goal to send the game into overtime. Winslow, who would finish with 11 receptions for 122 yards, capped the Hurricanes’ first OT possession with a circus catch, contorting his body in midair and reaching around a defender’s head to snare a seven-yard touchdown pass. Miami had momentum.

But back it swung to the Buckeyes with the flight of side judge Porter’s flag, the signal to the Hurricanes that their celebration was premature. Obscured by that bizarre turn of events was the gutsy play four snaps earlier that had made it possible. On fourth-and-14 from the 29, with the season on the line—and with his mother, Debbie, in the stands saying, "Time to throw it to Mikey"—Krenzel took a three-step drop and hummed a 17-yard strike to wideout Michael Jenkins at the right sideline.

Putting Krenzel in pressure spots is like throwing Brer Rabbit into the briar patch. The junior from Sterling Heights, Mich., led Ohio State to five fourth-quarter comebacks this season, leaving him with a somewhat cavalier attitude toward do-or-die situations. "It’s sort of like, ‘Yeah, our season’s on the line again,’" he says. "So let’s do something about it."

Krenzel’s rise was one of the many unexpected twists in a surprising Buckeyes season. When he won the starting job last fall, it was widely assumed he would merely be keeping the spot warm for redshirt junior Scott McMullen or highly touted freshman Justin Zwick. But Krenzel has a nice arm and is a good runner, as Miami discovered. The 6’4” 215-pounder rushed for a game-high 81 yards, taking advantage of the Hurricanes’ man-to-man coverage to pull the ball down and scramble for solid gains. Mostly, though, Krenzel is smart—a molecular genetics major who pulled straight B-pluses in his three fall courses: Molecular Genetics 608, Molecular Genetics 701 and Microbiology. "Those are graduate-level courses," says his brother, Brian, a medical student at Louisville who played strong safety at Duke. Brian is fiercely proud of his little brother but savors his praise for when Craig is out of earshot.

Last Saturday afternoon, long after many other Buckeyes had left for home, the Krenzel brothers and their uncle Stan played a round of golf at a public course in Phoenix. Stan is a lifelong Michigan fan who pulls for his nephew during the football season but makes him pay when it’s over.

"Watch Stan. He’ll spend the whole round talking during Craig’s backswing, trying to screw him up," said Brian, himself not above attempting to sabotage his brother’s game. Both uncle and brother had parred the first hole when Craig bent over a five-foot par putt. "This is where his game falls apart," said Stan.

"Awful quiet, isn’t it Craig?" said Brian. "Don’t look now, but it’s fourth-and-one," said Stan, who was silenced by the clattering of his nephew’s ball dropping into the cup.
New Year's Eve dilemma: Dinner and dancing, or watching football?

Sales of tickets to Deana Martin and the Rick Brunetto Orchestra's New Year's Eve celebration at the Blackwell Inn on the OSU campus have suffered because the Buckeyes are playing that night in a College Football Playoff semifinal.

By Allison Ward

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Grove City resident Dylan Sparks and his fiancee, Holly Graves, had long had their New Year's Eve plans mapped out.

In November, the couple — who typically ring in the new year at a Downtown party — bought tickets for the annual bash at the Hyatt Regency Columbus.

Then came the Dec. 4 announcement of the College Football Playoff teams: Ohio State, ranked No. 3, was in — and would face No. 2-ranked Clemson in the Fiesta Bowl in a semifinal game on Dec. 31.

With the matchup set to kick off after 7 p.m., the action would fall smack-dab in the middle of many central Ohioans' plans to usher in 2017.

"I'm a lifelong Buckeye fan," said Sparks, 31, who, along with Graves, is a season-ticket holder. "I was definitely worried. I wasn't sure what we were going to do about the game."

Not only will the upcoming Fiesta Bowl mark the first time in Ohio State's 127 seasons of football that the team has played on New Year's Eve, but the stakes don't get much higher: The winner earns a spot in the Jan. 9 national-title game against the winner of the earlier semifinal, Alabama vs. Washington.

Sparks and some friends with whom he and Graves plan to spend Saturday night quickly began thinking about a place near the hotel where they might watch the game. The problem eventually solved itself when the
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> With Ohio State, it brings a whole different variable, said Justin Evans, the Hyatt’s director of sales and marketing.

Indeed, in a city where Buckeye football reigns supreme, partygoers and party hosts alike have spent recent weeks working to manage — or, in some cases, to salvage — the overlap between the biggest party night of the year and OSU’s nationally televised playoff game.

The challenge for the Hyatt and other venues offering traditional New Year’s Eve celebrations is creating an atmosphere conducive to the most ravenous of Buckeye fans without making the most loyal of New Year’s Eve partygoers (especially those who don’t care about the game) unhappy.

At some events this year, that will mean adding televisions, creating a separate Fiesta Bowl-viewing room or possibly delaying the live entertainment.

“If everyone is ready to start dancing, we’ll have (the band) play,” said Katie Dobrowolski, event planner at the Three-Legged Mare, a bar in the Arena District hosting a masquerade party on Saturday night. “If everyone is on the edge of their seat watching the game, we might wait to get the party started.”

The Columbus-area group Sonic Boom will headline the party, set to start at 6:30 p.m. — an hour earlier than originally planned — to allow people to settle in before kickoff, Dobrowolski said.

“We want people to come watch the games with us, celebrate with us and, hopefully, celebrate a Buckeye win,” she said. “I think the game will make everyone a little more excited.”

At the Renaissance Downtown Columbus, Scott Lucas, a 1984 OSU graduate who annually hosts a large New Year’s Eve party at the hotel, is striving for a happy medium.

The party will feature a game-watching room but also make sure that the disc jockey, club lighting and drinks and hors d’oeuvres are ready to entertain New Year’s revelers who aren’t football fans.

“I was praying for them to make it, and then hoping that it was not the late game,” Lucas said of the Buckeyes. “It did create a planning challenge — we signed the contract in June, and we’ve had to adjust on the fly.”

The Hyatt will show the game on various screens, said Evans, the marketing director, but he emphasized that the hotel event is, first and foremost, a New Year’s Eve celebration.

“It’s been a hot topic for us ... but the party is not going to be dictated by the football games,” he said.

The conflict was a hot topic, too, for presenters of First Night Columbus, the family friendly New Year’s Eve party taking place again this year at COSI-Columbus.

“There’s no question that in Columbus, this will have an impact on everything,” said Mike Collins, executive director of the event.

He said he and his crew had lengthy conversations in anticipation of an OSU bowl game on New Year’s Eve but ultimately decided against adding televisions to the science museum, mostly because of logistical challenges.

As a result, he is expecting larger crowds when doors first open at 5:30 and maybe again after the game, as the clock nears midnight.

“Go Bucks,” Collins said. “We all get that. This isn’t a resistance. We want to cater to the audience who has been very loyal to us.”

The upside, he pointed out, is the short-lived nature of the overlapping events.

Poor TV ratings for the playoff semifinal matchups on New Year’s Eve last year prompted the College Football Playoff committee to adjust its schedule for future semifinal games.

The net effect: The semifinals won’t land on New Year’s Eve again until the 2021 and 2022 seasons — and whether Ohio State will be playing, of course, remains to be seen.
OSU’s participation in the playoff, Mrs. Brunetto lamented, have “slaughtered” sales of tickets to their New Year’s Eve Celebration With Deana Martin and the Rick Brunetto Orchestra, scheduled for the Blackwell Inn on the Ohio State campus.

The couple not only saw an immediate stall in ticket sales after the announcement, she said, but five tabletops of 10 that had been on hold were quickly canceled.

“People are either going to watch the Buckeyes at a bar or restaurant or having home parties. They’re treating it like a Michigan (vs. OSU) Saturday."

(Even the Brunetos’ nephew, who typically helps with sound at their shows, can’t make it. He will be in Phoenix for the game.)

From a fan perspective, some diehards are happy to let Buckeye football take over their New Year’s Eve plans.

OSU graduate Lauren Boyle, who welcomes the reprieve from the stuffiness and high expectations that generally surround the evening, actually hoped for the later game time, as did several of her friends who also graduated from the university.

She will make the drive from her home in Cleveland to Columbus to be among fellow alumni cheering OSU.

“We’ll treat it more like a game day than a holiday,” said Boyle, 25.

That means an Ohio State sweatshirt and jeans instead of a dress and high-heels, and a campus-area bar instead of a swanky hotel party.

“It’s so nice to not have to worry about what to wear.”

award@dispatch.com

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