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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

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FINALLY!!

Lengthy NCAA Probe Results In Probation For Buckeyes

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Following an exhaustive 18-month process in which virtually every dark alley was explored, the NCAA placed the Ohio State athletic program on probation for one year stemming from violations made during the recruitment of Cincinnati high school basketball player Damon Flint.

In addition to the one-year probation, the NCAA publicly admonished the university for failures in both rules awareness and compliance to those rules. In addition, it singled out head coach Randy Ayers for not recognizing and reporting the violations when they occurred.

"You are not dealing with a new coach," said David Swank, a professor of law at Oklahoma and chairman of the NCAA's Committee on Infractions. "You are dealing with an experienced coach who should have known those rules because he had been recruiting for a number of years."

Swank was alluding to the now infamous meeting at Damon's restaurant between former OSU assistant coach Paul Brazeau, Cincinnati Woodward head coach Jim Leon and Flint.

The meeting occurred during Flint's junior year at the off-campus restaurant during a time when NCAA rules specify there can be no contact outside the boundaries of the university campus.

In addition, after the meeting Brazeau gave \$60 to Leon to pay for the meal and transportation and also gave him some nylon gym bags and coaches notebooks. Those, also, are NCAA violations.

While Ayers met briefly with the party at Damon's, he did not participate in the money exchange. During a news conference to respond to the NCAA's sanctions, he explained that he believed the restaurant to be part of the campus area, therefore within NCAA guidelines for contact with prospective recruits during an unofficial visit.

"I just felt, at the time, that we were within a campus area and were not in violation of any NCAA rules," Ayers said. "I just felt with the number of activities that we have at Damon's, and it being a campus-area restaurant, I felt it was OK to eat there."

The fact that Ayers did not realize that Damon's was an off-campus site and not available within NCAA rules to coaches to entertain prospective recruits during unofficial visits pointed up the NCAA's claim that there was a lack of institutional control of the men's basketball program when it came to rules compliance.



FACING THE MUSIC — Ohio State athletic director Andy Geiger and basketball coach Randy Ayers answer questions from reporters regarding the NCAA's penalties against the Buckeyes. Among the sanctions announced, OSU will be placed on probation for one year, Ayers cannot recruit off-campus until next spring and the team loses one scholarship for the 1994-95 season.

Swank's comments about Ayers being a veteran coach — a six-year assistant under Eldon Miller and Gary Williams before becoming head coach in 1989 — touched off an exchange between the coach and reporters during the news conference, reporters finding it extremely difficult to believe Flint was the only prospect ever entertained at Damon's on an unofficial visit.

But Ayers steadfastly maintained no other player had been taken to the restaurant during his time as an assistant or head coach.

Still, reporters persisted.

"Even though you never had a monitoring system in place to mark down when and where you took people," asked Bruce Hooley of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "you are 100 percent certain you never took a kid to Damon's for anything other than an official visit?"

"Yes," Ayers replied. "We took several kids there while they were on official visits, but never unofficially."

Later, the head coach said that there were monitoring programs implemented by both former OSU athletic director Jim Jones and his former compliance director, Dick Finn.

"I think those programs were followed. I don't think they were followed to the T," Ayers said. "Again, it was a mistake we made and we were wrong in that. I think maybe the word 'compliance' has become a bigger issue with athletic programs in the last four or five years. Certainly, we had some programs implemented. It was our mistake, and being the head basketball coach, I assume total responsibility for the mistakes that we made."

When all was said and done, the NCAA chose to adopt most of the penalties that Ohio State had suggested.

Those include the one-year probation, loss of one scholarship for the 1994-95 season, barring Ayers from off-campus recruiting during the upcoming July and September evaluation periods, freezing Ayers' salary at \$110,000 for the 1994-95 academic year and a more stringent program for recognizing, knowing and adhering to NCAA legislation and rules.

In the end, Ohio State got off rather easy. Despite the probation, the Buckeyes will be allowed to appear on television at any time and remain eligible for

Continued On Page 2

BSB Now On Monthly Schedule

Buckeye Sports Bulletin is currently on its summer publishing schedule of one issue each in June, July and August.

Since the OSU football season begins early this fall with the Pigskin Classic, *BSB's* August issue will serve as this year's Football Preview and is scheduled to be published and mailed Aug. 18.

BSB will publish an issue on Sept. 1 with a review of the Pigskin Classic, then return to its regular weekly publishing schedule later in September following the game at Washington.

Damon's Dinner Touched Off Investigation

Continued From Page 1

the NCAA Tournament.

Swank also indicated that his committee had accepted recommendations from the University of Hartford, which has disciplined Brazeau for his part in the Ohio State case.

Hartford has placed Brazeau on a one-year university probation and has barred him from off-campus recruiting for 13 days during the 26-day July evaluation period and for eight more days during the 18-day contact period in September.

Under new legislation, the NCAA could have imposed its own sanctions on Brazeau. The rule was put in place to prevent coaches from committing violations at one school, then moving to another without having to answer to the previous charges.

Brazeau has remained tight-lipped about the case throughout the past 18 months, but when contacted by *BSB* in Hartford regarding his part, he said, "Obviously, I regret it. I have struggled through this year and suffered a lot of embarrassment. Mistakes were made. I just hope we can move forward and be better people for it."

The fact that money had changed hands and that improper contact was made with Flint by Brazeau, along with then-volunteer assistant coach Tom Souder, was not the only problem the NCAA had with Ohio State. The fact that the university waited more than a year to report the violations was at the heart of the investigation.

"Had that violation been reported at the time, it would have been only a secondary violation," Swank said. "When there were additional contacts (during Flint's junior year) and extra contacts his senior year, it became a significant violation."

Other rules violations, including Ayers expressing his condolences to

NCAA's List Of Sanctions

- Public reprimand and censure.
- One year of probation beginning June 4, 1994.
- During this period of probation, Ohio State shall: (a) develop and implement a comprehensive educational program on NCAA legislation to instruct coaches, the faculty athletics representative, athletic department personnel and all university staff members with responsibility for the certification of student-athletes for admission, retention or competition; (b) submit a preliminary report to the administrator for the Committee on Infractions by Sept. 1, 1994, setting forth a schedule for establishing this compliance and educational program; and (c) file a final report by Aug. 1, 1995, with the committee's administrator indicating the progress made during the probationary period. Particular emphasis should be placed on education and compliance with NCAA legislation involving recruitment of student-athletes.
- During the 1994-95 academic year, the number of scholarships permitted in men's basketball will be reduced from 13 to 12.
- The number of coaches permitted to recruit off-campus at any one time will be reduced from three to two during the July 5-31, 1994, evaluation period and from two to one during the Sept. 9-26, 1994, contact period. In both cases, head coach Randy Ayers shall be the coach who shall not recruit off-campus.
- Recertification from OSU president Gordon Gee that all of Ohio State's current athletics policies and practices conform to all requirements of NCAA regulations.
- OSU will issue a written reprimand to Ayers and freeze his salary at its current level for the 1994-95 academic year.
- Each member of the men's basketball coaching staff will be required to attend at least one NCAA legislative and rules interpretation seminar by the end of the 1994-95 academic year.
- OSU will reprimand and admonish former women's track coach Mamie Rallins and has reassigned her to primarily administrative duties.
- OSU will issue a written reprimand to and admonish head men's track coach Russ Rogers to take steps that violations do not recur within his program.

Flint on the death of his mother and later talking with Flint's grandmother, were seen as petty by many following the case.

But Swank stressed that no sanctions would likely have been forthcoming had they not been stacked on top of others.

"Taken individually, many of them are not terribly serious violations," he said. "But to have a series of violations, all surrounding one student-athlete, makes it a serious, major violation."

Swank, OSU vice president of affairs David Williams II and OSU athletic director Andy Geiger all agreed that the punishment fit the university's crime. All further agreed that the penalties were severe enough to make Ohio State cautious about future recruiting practices.

But Swank was also quick to point out that the NCAA's sanctions would not cripple the OSU basketball program.

"And that is never our intent," he said. "Rules were broken, violations occurred and penalties must be invoked. However, I see no reason why Ohio State cannot rebound from this and rebound from it quickly. I don't believe it should have a great deal of effect on their program."

While Ayers was getting — and accepting — much of the blame for the violations that led to the protracted investigation and subsequent sanctions, the NCAA report made no mention of either Jones or Finn.

Reports have been persistent that both men were forced to take early retirement from their longtime positions due to the NCAA rules violations.

Swank said he had no knowledge of the early retirements. "So I think it would be obvious that did not enter into our deliberations." Later, Williams concurred.

"The NCAA committee talked about institutional control and I think we all have to take responsibility for that," he said. "If they had meant another group of people, they would have said that."

"A lot of people find it hard to believe, but the fact that Jim and Dick took early retirement when they did was just a coincidence. If you were privileged to know the numbers that were offered in Dick's situation and in Jim's situation . . . quite honestly, if that was available to me, I'd take it, too."

Under terms of the early retirement package offered by the university, Jones will draw approximately \$86,400 annually for the remainder of his life, or about 80 percent of his \$108,000 salary. Finn is eligible to receive between 83 and 86 percent of his \$45,000 salary.

Those numbers notwithstanding, reports have continued to circulate that Ohio State had to somehow get rid of both men to prevent the NCAA from invoking harsher penalties. But both have rejected that notion and Jones did so again in the wake of the announcement of penalties.

"No matter what is said, people are going to have their own perception," he said. "I know that I was not forced to retire. It was something I did of my own free will. I voluntarily took the buyout. No more, no less."

In addition to the penalties imposed on the men's basketball program, the NCAA also announced that Ohio State had taken action in response to a pair of minor violations within the track program.

In the spring of 1991, a volunteer track coach provided individual instruction to then-freshman sprinter Chris Nelloms. Since Nelloms was a Proposition 48 student at the time, that was not permissible under NCAA guidelines.

Then, in 1992, former head women's coach Mamie Rallins drove a track team member back home from the NCAA championships in Indianapolis. Since the team member was not competing in the meet, that is a violation of NCAA rules.

Head men's coach Russ Rogers was reprimanded for the 1991 incident, while Rallins was removed from her head coaching position by Ohio State and assigned to primarily administrative duties.

The case marks the second time the OSU athletic program has been on NCAA probation, but the first in nearly 40 years.


The football and men's basketball programs were put on probation and barred from postseason appearances for nine months in 1956. Football coach Woody Hayes admitted he had made small loans to some of his players, a violation of NCAA rules, and a subsequent investigation found 30 athletes had been paid for no-work summer jobs. The athletes were ordered to perform work to earn the money.

The only other time Ohio State has run afoul of NCAA regulations was in 1978 when the football program was publicly reprimanded for providing improper transportation and entertainment to a recruit.

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NCAA Questions Still Prevalent

The NCAA investigation is finally over and the sanctions against Ohio State have been announced. Still, there are a lot of questions regarding the ramifications of the penalties invoked by the NCAA.

Many of those questions remain without definitive answers, but we'll try to supply answers to the things we know and at least speculate on some of the things we don't.

Q. Ohio State is now on probation. That's an ugly term, but exactly what does it mean?

A. No university wants to be on NCAA probation. Ohio State's entire athletic program must keep its nose clean for a one-year period. For a department that has been mostly clean for the past 100 years, that shouldn't be too difficult.

Q. There was something mentioned about the NCAA's "Repeat Offender Rule." What is that and is Ohio State involved in it?

A. That is a more polite term for the "Death Penalty." From June 4, 1994, the men's basketball program must remain within all NCAA guidelines for a period of five years. If it repeats violations or commits others, it could be looking at the death penalty, which means the NCAA could shut down the program for a certain length of time. That would be only in an extreme case, though.

Q. So, really, what are the penalties against Ohio State?

A. In addition to the probation, the men's basketball program loses one scholarship for the 1994-95 season, and head coach Randy Ayers cannot recruit off-campus during the upcoming July evaluation and September contact periods. With the exception of some additional paperwork and a good faith effort on OSU's part to pay attention to NCAA regulations, that's it.

Q. Are those considered major penalties?

A. Regardless of the fact university officials say otherwise, those penalties are not too severe. The fact that Ayers cannot recruit off-campus is probably the most damaging. Normally, it is the head coach who goes into a player's home and closes the deal for prospective recruits. However, the Buckeyes already have two verbal commitments for next season, and while they want to get at least two more, they probably won't get any more commitments until the spring signing period. Ayers will be back on the road by then.

Q. What about the loss of a scholarship?

A. Big deal. The loss of that scholarship is for the upcoming season. The Buckeyes weren't going to give all their grants for next year anyway. In fact, they can still sign another player — maybe some JUCO who has fallen through the cracks — and still be well within the sanctions.

Q. So how would the penalties best be described?

A. Nothing more than a slap on the wrist.

Q. Why did this take so long? Was the NCAA trying to make an example of Ohio State because of its high profile?

A. All indications are that the NCAA proceeded as best it could. The length of the case can be traced to the fact that there were really two separate investigations. The investigation on violations regarding Damon Flint, which were reported in October of 1992, was com-

Editor's Notebook with Mark Rea

pleted later that year. But when additional violations were reported in early 1993, the NCAA reopened the case and didn't complete that investigation until last December. Then, it was a matter of getting the parties together, waiting for the Committee on Infractions to convene and so forth. All of that took an additional six months.

Q. What were the additional violations?

A. No one seems willing to say. However, the rumors we have heard include enticements to prospective and current players. Those enticements included everything from free shoes to vehicles for players and players' parents to jobs for players' parents to bankrolls of cash. Grievous NCAA violations all, but unfounded.

Q. Where did the NCAA get such a notion?

A. This case's "Deep Throat," who has been referred to repeatedly as "The Anonymous Source." It remains unclear whether the source for the Flint violations was the same as the one who reported the additional violations.

Q. The Damon's meal and the exchange of money and gym bags between former OSU assistant coach Paul Brazeau and Cincinnati Woodward head coach Jim Leon was really at the heart of the NCAA investigation. Who told the NCAA this exchange occurred?

A. Again, no one is saying. Leon has claimed that not only does he know who turned OSU in, but Cincinnati head coach Bob Huggins swears and Ayers knows as well. Ayers swears he doesn't. However, we can do a quick process of elimination. We know with reasonable certainty that neither Ayers nor Brazeau told the NCAA. That really leaves only Leon, Huggins or Flint. The case can be made that Leon told Huggins about the exchange and Huggins turned OSU in. Or, another possible scenario traces back to Flint himself. There were rumors that he had reconsidered signing with the Buckeyes and wanted to play at UC. The exchange of money gave him a perfect out.

Q. Who is the biggest loser in this 18-month nightmare?

A. Probably Ayers. Just three years removed from being national coach of the year, he has been chastised publicly by the NCAA, officially reprimanded by his university and is certainly under scrutiny to make sure he runs a clean program. Unfortunately, his program also appears to be floundering and there is a lot of work ahead to return it to prominence.

Q. How was recruiting affected by the investigation and how will it be affected by probation?

A. The fear of the unknown crippled Ohio State's recruiting efforts for most of the past two years. While the Buckeyes were still in on several big-name recruits, none of them would commit to OSU while major sanctions were a possibility. It's a safe bet that had none of this occurred, Ohio State would not only have Flint, but probably Samaki Walker and Jerod Ward as well. Now that the sanctions are known and everyone knows the Buckeyes are not barred from appearing on television or competing in the NCAA Tournament, recruiting should get better.

Q. Many times when a coach's program is placed on NCAA probation, that coach is fired. Why wasn't Ayers fired?

A. According to OSU athletic director Andy Geiger, Ayers made a mistake, something human beings do every day. While it was a fairly substantial mistake, it was not deemed to be a firing offense.

Q. Isn't what saved Ayers' job is that he has a long-term contract and Ohio State would have had to pay him too much money had he been fired?

A. No. The university could have fired him and not had to pay the balance of his contract. Ayers has a clause in his contract that would have allowed OSU to terminate him for getting his program on NCAA probation. Geiger chose not to exercise that option and Ayers remains signed through the 1998-99 season.

Q. No mention was made in the NCAA's Committee on Infractions report about former Ohio State athletic director Jim Jones. Yet, most reports have hinted that he was forced into early retirement to help appease the NCAA and lessen the penalties against the Buckeyes. Was he forced out or not?

A. Let's put it this way: In the middle of the NCAA's deliberations, Jones took an early retirement package just days after it was offered. Then, the sanctions against Ohio State are not very damaging. Coincidence?

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Ayers Receives, Accepts Lion's Share Of Blame; Vows To Rebuild Program

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Sitting to the left of his two immediate bosses, Randy Ayers sat and faced the music.

A few hours before, Ayers had listened in on a teleconference as NCAA Committee on Infractions chairman David Swank singled him out for various recruiting violations that have resulted in Ohio State being placed on probation for one year.

Then, he joined OSU vice president for student affairs David Williams II, who oversees the athletic department for university president Gordon Gee, and OSU athletic director Andy Geiger for a news conference to respond to the NCAA's findings.

In all, there were 17 violations committed, all of them during the recruitment of Cincinnati Woodward star Damon Flint. The most serious of the violations occurred Oct. 30, 1991, when former assistant coach Paul Brazeau and volunteer coach Tom Souder entertained Flint and Woodward head coach Jim Leon at Damon's restaurant near campus.

Because Flint was only in his junior year, and because Damon's was not on the OSU campus, the contact was improper under NCAA guidelines. Then, when Brazeau gave Leon money to pay for the meal and transportation, along with some small gifts with OSU logos on them, the violations turned from minor to major.

The fact that Ayers also attended the meeting and that it went unreported for more than a year was always the heart of the NCAA's investigation.

Ayers has maintained that he thought with the number of university functions held at Damon's, as well as at the Parke University Hotel where the restaurant is located, the site was permissible as far as the NCAA was concerned.

In retrospect, the coach admits that he was wrong and should have known the rules better.

"I accept Professor Swank's comments and understand the reasons for them," Ayers said. "Being the head basketball coach, it's my responsibility to make sure that I am aware of what my staff and players do. But rest assured that we'll stay on top of this."

"I agree with the findings and the penalties leveled against us by the NCAA. We made a mistake and we're going to learn from it."

The lessons will be painful ones for Ayers personally. In addition to having his program placed on probation, he will be unable to recruit off-campus during the upcoming July and September recruiting periods. In addition, he will not receive the annual salary increase written into his contract, having his salary frozen at \$110,000 for the next year.

Also, his team loses one scholarship for next season, a year that is already shaping up to be a rebuilding season after last year's 13-15 finish. Despite all of that, though, Ayers remains upbeat about the job that lies ahead.

"I'm still excited," he said. "I'm concerned, but excited. The fight is still in me. I enjoy coming to work every day. I know we've had some other concerns in the program, but I think with the nucleus of young people we have coming back, I think we can be very competitive next year."

The fact that Ayers will be back to coach the Buckeyes for the 1994-95 season would have been in doubt had university officials sought to invoke Paragraph 11 of his contract.

In that paragraph, it states that the university may terminate or suspend Ayers without pay if he "knows or reasonably should have known" that a member of his staff was involved in a deliberate and serious rules violation and fails to report it to the director of athletics.

Williams indicated that he believed the violations committed were not grievous enough to warrant the university invoking that contract clause.

Likewise, athletic director Andy Geiger said deliberations by the university regarding Ayers' status never involved anything past freezing his salary for one year.

"I think Randy has admitted a mistake, but I think it's all right to move on



Randy Ayers

from there," Geiger said. "We all learn and grow from our mistakes and I have confidence in that aspect of Randy Ayers and every aspect that I have heard about in terms of his reputation or that I have experienced personally in my six weeks here."

"I believe Randy is a man of integrity and high moral standards and, as I have said repeatedly since coming here, I am really looking forward to working with Randy and his staff."

When Ayers appeared with former athletic director Jim Jones at a news conference in May of 1993 to announce the rules violations, the coach admitted that he had thought of possibly resigning. Rumors to that effect have cropped up periodically since that time, but he says it has never crossed his mind again.

"I did think about it initially, but I like being the head coach here and I'm still excited about it," Ayers said. "I'm looking forward to getting back to the challenge of working with young people and getting this page turned and getting it behind us."

Ayers' current contract runs through the 1998-99 season, but there is hardly anyone who believes he can complete the length of that contract if his program's fortunes do not pick up appreciably from the last two seasons.

After a 70-23 record in his first three years as head coach, a mark that included back-to-back Big Ten championships, Ayers has seen his team go only 28-29 over the past two seasons. Last year had the program's worst record since 1977.

The prospects for next season remain dim, especially since Lawrence Funderburke has graduated and there has been no one recruited to take his place. The Buckeyes will be extremely thin at the center and power forward positions, with only Gerald Eaker and Antonio Watson inside, and those are positions at which OSU was outmanned by virtually every opponent last year even with Funderburke.

Nevertheless, Ayers maintains a bright outlook.

"It's been a frustrating year for me, I will say that," he admitted. "But again, I'm excited about the people we have coming back and what we need to do to be competitive next year."

"We have some exciting players, some new ones coming in, and we're anxious to learn from the past and build for the future. We're going to get after it right away in the preseason NIT and I think we're going to surprise some people this year. I really do."

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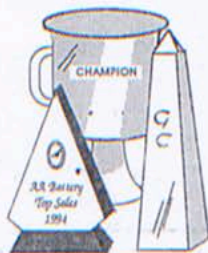
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The View From 15th and High

By Frank L. Moskowitz, Publisher

Can Ayers Resurrect Program And His Image At The Same Time?

The wait is finally over. As has been anticipated for some time, the NCAA gave the Ohio State basketball program a slap on the wrist for violations primarily involving the recruitment of Damon Flint.

The loss of a scholarship for the upcoming year is fairly laughable because Ohio State is having trouble finding people to give the scholarships to anyway. And some of the sting of taking Randy Ayers off the road for two recruiting periods was alleviated when the Bucks received two verbal commitments for next year before the sanctions were announced.

But even with the minor penalties, this whole affair was a lot more than a slap on the wrist to the program and to Ayers in particular.

The lengthy investigation not only cost the Buckeyes a player the caliber of Flint, who quickly bolted to Cincinnati, thus erasing one year's recruiting, but

also severely crippled this past year's recruiting efforts. While I'm confident Carlos Davis and Robert Shelton are solid ball players, they're hardly the "Fab Two." Besides, the Buckeyes needed more than just two players.

You can hardly blame a prep prospect for shying away from Ohio State when the possibility that the Buckeyes would be banned from television or NCAA appearances existed, a possibility rival recruiters no doubt played up.

So you have a weakened recruiting class this year, a lost recruiting class last year, and then you add to that the defections of the supposedly great recruiting class from the year before that. Charles Macon is gone, Nate Wilbourne is gone and Derek Anderson, perhaps the best player in the group, is a question mark after major knee surgery.

In the middle of this personnel shortage sits Randy Ayers.

Just two years ago, it seemed like he had stockpiled enough goodwill to last him well into the 21st century. But the prolonged investigation, two subpar seasons and a series of embarrassing incidents involving his players have left him on the ropes. Now he is forced to try to rebuild the program and rebuild his reputation with this severely diminished firepower. It certainly won't be an easy task.

It will most likely take time. The question would seem to be how much time will the fans and the new athletic administration give him? If the off-the-court distractions don't stop, my guess is they won't give Ayers very long.

FORMER BUCKEYE great Chris Spielman has often said that he would like to be head coach of the Ohio State football team after his NFL playing days are over. If that doesn't work out, perhaps the intense linebacker has a future in professional wrestling.

According to *Pro Wrestling Torch*, Spielman was in the corner of Bret "The Hit Man" Hart for a match with Owen Hart at a recent World Wrestling Federation show at the Palace in Auburn Hills, Mich.

While few details were given, it was said to be a three-star match, topped only by the Razor Ramon vs. Diesel match, which earned 3/4 stars from the *Torch* correspondent.

Perhaps one of our readers was in attendance and can give us some details of Spielman's involvement in the match. I know wrestling is supposed to be fake, but somehow it's hard for me to visualize Spielman faking contact. I hope he didn't hurt anybody.

AN ITEM in *USA Today* caused me to raise an eyebrow. The popular newspaper lists celebrity birthdays each day and it was noted that NFL quarterback John Elway turned 34 on June 28.

I must be having a lot of fun because time sure seems to have flown since the former Stanford great made his mark on OSU football history by completing an 18-yard touchdown pass to Emile Harry with 34 seconds remaining to defeat the Buckeyes 23-20 back in 1982.

As you may remember, that was a

game the Buckeyes appeared to have wrapped up. OSU linebacker Rowland Tatum had intercepted one of Elway's few mistakes of that afternoon to give the Bucks, leading 20-16, the ball on the Cardinal 25 with just 2:28 to play. But on second down from the 27, OSU's Mike Tomczak tried to find Gary Williams in the end zone. Charles Hutchings came up with the interception with 1:38 on the clock and Elway marched Stanford 80 yards to the victory.

It would be the first of many times that Elway, now with the Denver Broncos, would defeat a team from Ohio in dramatic fashion. If you don't believe me, just ask fans of the Cleveland Browns.

For the game against the Buckeyes, Elway completed 35 of 63 passes for 407 yards and two touchdowns. He also threw three interceptions in the game that would mark the first of three straight losses in Ohio Stadium for the Buckeyes, who would then rebound to win their final seven.

The game allowed Elway and the Cardinal to gain revenge for a 24-19 loss the Buckeyes had inflicted on them in Palo Alto the year before. That game featured a much ballyhooed match-up at quarterback between Elway and Ohio State's Art Schlichter. Elway was 28 of 42 for 248 yards with two touchdowns and no interceptions. Schlichter, limping noticeably on a gimpy ankle, was 16 of 32 for 240 yards. He threw two touchdown passes (both to Brad Dwelle) and was not intercepted.

After the game, Schlichter was told that a pro scout had said that if the two quarterbacks were on the same team, Schlichter would be a substitute.

"We're not on the same team," the OSU senior replied.

Your publisher was a lot less windy back in 1981. This column featured the following brief note after the game:

"Who's better, John Elway or Art Schlichter?"

"There's no question in my mind that Elway has the stronger arm. I've never seen a stronger arm. But the bottom line is winning, and Art did the things necessary for the victory."

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