Ho-lee Buckeye. It wasn't supposed to be that hard this Saturday against an Iowa team coming off a home loss to Northwestern, and missing starting quarterback Ricky Stanzi. But we got it done. And we're heading to Pasadena. In the Weekend Wrap, Peeks hits on Saturday's win, the looming Michigan game, "Tressel Ball", Jamal Lewis, J.J, Hickson, Delonte West, and how terrified he is of tonight's nationally televised Browns/Ravens game.

Buckeyes Headed to Pas...err...Kick-a-dena

God, I hate place kickers.

You get a couple of very good football teams waging war through the air and on the ground for sixty-plus minutes and then it all comes down to some former Major League Soccer player who weighs 175lbs soaking wet. Usually some finger-wagging, point-to-the-sky transfer student from the Balkans upon whose leg your weekend and your team's Bowl chances all ride.

It's even worse if it's a back-up finger-wagging, point-to-the-sky Balkan transfer student.

And when Ohio State's Devin Barclay made good on a 39-yard attempt in overtime to beat back the Iowa Hawkeyes 27-24 to send the Buckeyes to the Rose Bowl all I could do was breathe a huge sigh of relief.

That's because all the immediate joy of the overtime win had been sucked out of the proceedings by Ohio State coach Jim Tressel.

Because he loves place kickers. And punters. And kickoff specialists.

And, for the record, Barclay is actually from Annapolis, MD. That's as American a city as you can get given it's the home of the U.S. Naval Academy (as well as McGarvey's Saloon & Oyster Bar, by the way). But the point still stands. Tressel put a lot more faith in his kicker than he put in his offense and his quarterback in Saturday's win.

Tressel was true to himself though. He was bound and determined to win the turnover battle and give his defense the opportunity to rise to the occasion once again.

And the Buckeyes defense did just that. Iowa turned the ball over three times and the Buckeyes played turnover-free football all afternoon. And

when the stakes were the highest the defense rose up and turned the overtime possession for Iowa into a Hawkeye nightmare.

After an incompletion from the 25-yard line Ohio State got a tackle for a six yard loss, a 10 yard sack and then an interception on a desperation throw from Iowa QB James Vandenberg. Tressel sent Daniel Herron into the Iowa line three times for three yards when the Buckeyes took over and then sent Barclay onto the field to end the proceedings. To his credit, after missing a 47-yard FG attempt earlier, Barclay was perfect and the Buckeyes, 9th in the latest AP poll, head back to the Rose Bowl for the first time since 1997.

Pack up the kicking tees and punting nets fellas. We're taking them west.

Tressel-Ball

I don't want to come off as ungrateful. I am a huge Jim Tressel fan. He has a crystal trophy on display somewhere in the OSU athletic department trophy case and his dominance over what was once the University of Michigan is something for which I'll be forever grateful.

Think about it: this website has never had to deconstruct

or melt down over an Ohio State loss to Michigan.

But damn, it's not always (ever) easy to watch.

The biggest issue I have with Tressel is that he has access to the best players in the country year after year and he brings his fair share of those guys to Columbus nearly every season. The recruits he lands for Ohio State are inherently gifted athletes. On the average they are superior to the athletes and players that most schools land. That is a huge advantage for Ohio State.

But once they get to Columbus that athletic advantage is often minimized by the style Tressel employs. He seemingly plays nearly every big game with the hopes of it coming down to one play. Hell, he plays a lot of the lesser games the same way (see Ohio State v. U.S Naval Academy, 2009). That just doesn't leave much margin for error.

Maybe it would be different if Terrelle Pryor had morphed

into Colt McCoy over the past summer. God knows I don't want to see Pryor putting the ball in the air 40 times every Saturday in his current form.

But it sure would do a heart good to see Tressel go for the throat and open things up occasionally. There's simply no reason why the offense can't be as dominant as the defense if allowed to attack more frequently.

And one day, maybe soon, this Buckeye offense is going to find itself trailing by a score or two in the second half and they are ill-equipped to dig themselves out of such a hole.

Not to mention I'm getting older and my heart doesn't need to race while I'm sitting down.

Are You Ready for Some Football?

A Monday night partaaay?

Are you ready for some Mike and John and Jaws? They're here to get it kick-started.

Umm...no.

I'm not ready for some football on Monday night. I suspect the Browns are no more prepared for it than I am.

I'm not ready to watch Brady Quinn hand the ball to a guy who has announced his retirement. I'm not ready to watch Quinn throw four yard outs on 3rd and 11 to guys who can't get off the line of scrimmage or hold onto the ball.

I'm not ready for Brandon McDonald to play two-hand touch and patty cake with receivers who are in the process of running past him.

I'm not ready to pray that Josh Cribbs can return four kickoffs and two punts for scores and that Dave Zastudil can average 50+ yards per punt and down all of them inside the 20-yard line.

No.

I am most definitely not ready for some Monday Night Football.

Etcetera

- Dear Jamal Lewis, please shut your pie hole and slip off into retirement gracefully. Your quitting at mid-season was bad enough. Your public complaining about your coach and his practice schedule was pathetic. We know he's a tyrannical tool. Hell, everyone except the old soccer fan who signs your check knows it.

Your career was defined by hard running (and maybe a little by a conspiracy to distribute 5 kilos of cocaine charge, but I digress) and you're doing no good to your legacy or your teammates by acting like a petulant little girl.

Ride it out, let the overwhelming suck that is Cleveland Browns football consume itself without you adding fuel to its fire and then

enjoy a long, healthy, prosperous retirement. As Vince Neil and Nikki Sixx and the rest of the boys in Motley Crue used to sing, "Girl, don't go away mad. Girl, just go away."

- I'm still giving the Cavaliers 20-25 games before looking harder at what's going on with the one, true contender in this town, but suffice it to say that I'm intrigued with what J.J. Hickson is doing in his new-found starting role.

Hickson showed glimpses last season of incredible athleticism and he's doing it again with the Cavs starting five. Back to back games that saw the 21-year old notch career highs in points as the fourth option on the floor bodes well. Even more so when you consider all of Hickson's scoring

chances come off hustle and opportunities off of missed shots and defensive break downs.

After dropping their first two games of the season the Cavs have rebounded to win seven of their last eight games, including games on back to back nights against playoff teams Orlando and Miami.

Obviously there's a long way to go and more improvement to come, but this team has done nothing to disprove the fact that it's one talented basketball team.

I am starting to get worried about Delonte

West though. This situation with the mercurial and talented guard bears watching because the Cavs can't let it fester and plague them all year.

If the Cavs have to go out and get a guy like Stephen Jackson to replace West this seas on it could cost them a kid like Hickson and it could cause another delay in getting that on-court chemistry thing settled.

So while there are options out there if West can't be counted on, the best-case scenario for the Cavs is to hope that West can get his act together and be a force on the court as opposed to a distraction off of it.

- Sign of the times? I've gone the entire length of this article without noting that next Saturday is the Ohio State-Michigan tilt in Ann Arbor. How far has U of M fallen that they, and therefore this game, are an afterthought on the schedule?

Clearly the Buckeyes should go up to Michigan and make it six in a row over the Wolverines.

And I hope they do. Obviously.

So I'm begging for Coach Tressel to step on the throats of Rich Rodriguez and his team. Take care of the football and beat the Maize & Blue into a bloody pulp.

Do not overlook that team up north. Their year and the Michigan career of Rich Rodriguez would be salvaged if they somehow knock off the Buckeyes.