Ohio State football is rich in tradition, and since his hiring, Coach Tressel has made the upholding of these traditions a cornerstone of his program in Columbus.

5. Tailgating

Why has tailgating become so big before Ohio State football games? Aren't there better places to drink than in a parking lot where you have to at least make some effort to hide your beer like a sixteen year old smoking in the boys room?

This is just a classic example of men making the best of a lousy situation. Due to traffic, most fans typically have to leave their homes a couple of hours before game time. I dare any ticket holder to try to get downtown less than an hour and a half before kickoff. Try it, let me know how the first quarter sounds on the radio.

A walk through the RV parking near the Schottenstein Center or Jesse Owens Stadium shows just how dedicated some tailgaters are. There are a plethora of impressively adorned school buses that have been converted into tailgating palaces or RVs blaring music. Tailgating at Buckeyes games has become so big that many of the major corporations in the Columbus area use them as "corporate perks" and get togethers. That might not be a bad idea given how difficult it is to get Buckeye tickets. These folks are just the tip of the iceberg - for there are many other types of tailgaters on campus for game time.

Years ago, police used to close Lane Avenue to traffic and the road would be packed from the Olentagy River to High Street with people, elbow to elbow, carrying a twelve pack in hand. Recent riots following games have caused this practice to be haulted. Currently, several establishments on Lane Avenue offer closed parties that are actually pretty good, although they are overcrowded. Probably the most notable of are the “Heiney Gate” at the Holiday Inn or the “Rally at the Riverwatch” at the Riverwatch Towers. These parties feature live bands, alcohol, and giant televisions to watch the game on.

Prominently featured at most tailgates is the growing Cornhole game. No, this is not the same “game” you used to play with your Uncle Norman (the one you may still be seeking treatment for today). This is a game very similar to horseshoes, but since bean-bags are much softer than horseshoes, this game is probably a whole heck of a lot safer for drunk people.

Tailgating is in no way unique to Ohio State football. As a matter of fact, I am sure that by the standards of Kansas City Chiefs fans, Buckeyes tailgaters are hacks and amateurs. That having been said, it is hard to imagine a Buckeyes football game without spending at least three hours eating, drinking, and being merry in a parking lot before the game.

4. W. W. Hayes

It is hard to imagine how one person could be considered a tradition, but Woody Hayes is clearly an integral part of the football tradition in Columbus; bear with me while I elaborate.

Coach Hayes won a handful of national titles (five) and a bunch of Big Ten titles (thirteen), but that pales in comparison to the overall contribution he made to the

university and the football program.

Woody Hayes, a former Navy commander, brought a hard-edged style of leadership and common sense approach to the university; traits that match the conservative “personality” of the state. In nearly three decades Hayes created an image of football at Ohio State that still persists to this day. Most people outside of the “Buckeye Nation” still identify Ohio State football with Hayes’ “three yards and a cloud of dust” offense and gritty defense; it is this tough, workman-like play that not only reflected the personality of the man behind it, but also serves as a source of pride and inspiration in the men of scarlet and grey today.

3. The Rivalry

Many fans think I am crazy for ranking the rivalry with Michigan all the way down at #3, but isn’t controversy the purpose of a list like this one?

The Ohio State-Michigan rivalry can be traced back to the earliest days of college football. A simple look at the rotunda at Ohio Stadium reveals the age of the rivalry. In 1922 the doors to Ohio Field opened, but it was not until the third game, against Michigan, that the stadium was dedicated.

As the story goes, the flowers adorning the top of the rotunda were to be painted in the colors of the school that won the dedication game. To this day the flowers bear the very same urine color as a Michigan helmet, for the Buckeyes fell in defeat to Michigan 19-0.

The early part of this rivalry was exceptionally one sided. Although the two schools started playing regularly in 1897, the Buckeyes were unable to record their first victory until 1919, thanks largely to the efforts of the legendary Chic Harley.

After dropping the first 13 games in the series Ohio State was able to essentially play Michigan to draw (37-34-4) until the dark days of the John Cooper Era. It has taken Coach Jim Tressel several years to wash the bitter taste of the 1990s from the collective mouth of Columbus.

The Ohio State-Michigan game was moved to the last week of the season in 1935 and as a result, this game has directly, winner take all, decided the Big Ten title an astonishing 20 times. The game has influenced the ability of one team or another to walk away with conference title 21 additional times.

Several subplots have emerged from nearly a decade of hatred, but one of the most interesting and obscure to the non Buckeye fan is the legend of the “Gold Pants.” In 1934, Francis Schmidt, then coach of the Buckeyes, spawned this legend with an off hand comment regarding his teams chances of victory against Michigan. When asked how he thought his team would fair, Schmidt responded that he didn’t see a reason why his team could not win, after all, “the Michigan players put their pants on one leg at a time, same as everybody else.”

Ever since players from Buckeye teams that emerge victorious rate a golden charm in the shape of a pair of pants to represent the victory.

2. T. B. D. B. I. T. L.

While seasons and careers hinge on the outcome of the Michigan game, each and every Buckeyes home game starts the same. Over one hundred thousand fans rise to their feet to greet the drum major and The Best Damn Band in the Land.

Most of us can remember back to our high school days and think back to our own marching bands. In general the band was not “cool.” This is not to say that members of the band were losers, that was decided on a case-by-case basis, but being a member of your high school marching band probably did not command the respect of your peers.

That is not the case at Ohio State. Marching band prodigies from across the country flock to Columbus each and every year to participate in a grueling, boot camp-style audition, complete with senior band members yelling in their faces. In spite of the stigmas, heat, and hardship, these kids persevere. They drive on to represent their school and to be a member of the best marching band in the nation.

The band was originally organized in 1878 as a twelve piece fife and bugle corps. The band would not take on its more modern form until the influence of Gustav Bruder, a professional military musician. Bruder brought his fusion of military experience and professional expertise to mold the band into its current form. The uniforms worn by the band represent this proud heritage.

Currently, the Ohio State Marching Band is considered the world’s largest all brass band. In a standard home football game, the band will consist of 192 members and 33 understudies.

The trademark of the Ohio State University Marching Band, “Script Ohio,” is one of the most recognized traditions in college sports. Most first time observers marvel at the precision of the movements and the remarkable timing and coordination of the band members as they pass through the intersection points. If you have never seen “Script Ohio,” I highly recommend it regardless of your feelings about Ohio State football or marching bands in general.

1. The ‘Shoe

It is impossible to imagine a relevant football program without a serious football facility. The Ohio State University football team enjoys one of the most remarkable venues in all of college football.

Originally built in 1922, during the fledgling stages of college football, the horseshoe shaped Ohio Stadium was built to a then unthinkable capacity of 66,000. College football had been around for about 35 years by this point, but it took a super star to rally the state of Ohio and to force the university to upgrade its venue; Chic Harley was one such star.

Built largely on a grass roots donation drive, the original cost of construction for Ohio Stadium was just shy of $1,500,000. A princely sum for the time and most critics thought that the stadium was way to big for a college game and would never be filled to capacity, but they just failed to realize that Ohio State was just ahead of its time. Questions regarding the ability to fill the stadium to capacity were answered during the dedication game against Michigan on 10/21/22, in which thousands of fans were turned away.

Well, that was a neat history lesson, but how does that make the ‘Shoe a tradition. Well aside from its unique architecture and shape, the ‘Shoe is a Buckeye tradition because without it, Ohio State football would probably never have become the program that fans enjoy today.

The signature shape of the ‘Shoe and the atmosphere within have been symbols of Ohio State Football for eighty three years, predating the first Buckeye National Title by twenty years, and Ohio Stadium is currently listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. The building was not honored solely because of its magnitude.

The stadium was honored because its construction was absolutely revolutionary. It featured a revolutionary upper deck and column support structure and other architectural marvels for the time like a slurry wall to hold back the water of Olentangy River.

The stadium has since been renovated in 2000 and the capacity has been increased to 105,000. Through the course of the renovations, the university undertook great efforts to maintain the original character of the stadium. As a result of the renovations, the stadium creates an intimidating atmosphere for opposing players and stands as a fitting and impressive symbol of the program that resides within.