The Ohio State football family has lost a couple of members from the 2010 Rose Bowl champions, and on Monday the media was able to catch up on all the offseason developments. As the Buckeye players reported to campus for the summer quarter, to enroll and begin summer workouts, the team announced publicly that two players will not be returning for the 2010 season. And the incoming recruiting class has experienced some casualties of its own...one quite literally so. But if you read far enough, there's actually a slice of good Buckeye news in there too...on top of landing Braxton Miller, that is.

Two Short As Buckeyes Assemble

The biggest hit in terms of immediate on-the-field impact, is the official word that Duron Carter, who was the #3 wide receiver as a true freshman in 2009, has withdrawn from OSU , and will be attending Coffeyville (KS) Community College, where he will try to right the academic ship that he capsized in Columbus last fall. The news comes as a shock to no one, since Carter was ruled ineligible for the Rose Bowl in January, and Jim Tressel has previously stated publicly that he wasn't sure Carter would be back this summer.

Reportedly, Carter's classroom performance had improved a lot following fall quarter, but the hole he had dug for himself was too deep to climb out of. He will play football at the JUCO level, and if he makes the grades, he could be back at OSU as soon as January, but more likely in June. Via social media Monday, Carter said "yes, i would love to go back to OSU! im a buckeye all the way!"

As an aside...Carter's Hall of Fame dad, Cris, has been the model of class and Buckeye loyalty throughout Duron's long enforced absence. He continues to work with the other OSU receivers and help out at practices and scrimmages. In part for his sake, I hope the kid makes the best of his second chance to be a Buckeye.

Also leaving the OSU program is Keith Wells , the redshirt sophomore defensive end, who will transfer from Ohio State , as his opportunities for playing time would have been limited going into 2010...at least. The position is probably the deepest on the Buckeye roster, with Nathan Williams, Cam Heyward, Solomon Thomas and sophomore Melvin Fellows all in front of Wells on the depth chart. Add to that two promising incoming freshmen, Darryl Baldwin and J.T. Moore , and an outstanding group of defensive linemen, including the nation's #4 and #11 ranked DE's, already committed for next fall, and Wells' loss is fairly easily absorbed.

Wells could probably start for seven or eight Big Ten teams right now, and of course scores of other schools, and he could still turn out to be a big time performer. He's a rare talent, so you can't blame him for going where he can possibly play more and sooner, even after sitting out the 2010 season. He departs with everyone's best wishes for a stellar football career.

From Bad to Worse

The feeling of family in the OSU football program extends to future Buckeyes, and attending Ohio State was the original plan was for star defensive end Jamel Turner of Youngstown Ursuline. Initially part of the OSU class of 2010, Turner's football career began spiraling downward after his junior football season at Ursuline, and this weekend it bottomed out in tragedy for him at a house in Youngstown.

Turner was shot five times by an intruder Saturday night, and was clinging to life Monday in a Youngstown hospital with serious wounds to the neck and lungs...and he was the luckier of the two shooting victims. His companion, a 17-year old girl was killed . The prime suspect, the girl's ex-boyfriend, is being sought in the murder. Turner's status was upgraded from critical to serious condition on Monday.

As sad as the incident is, this shooting is not the reason Turner won't be playing football for Ohio State. That fate had been sealed some time ago. Turner was an early commit to the 2010 class shortly after his junior season, and then after a discipline problem got him dismissed from the Ursuline basketball team that winter, he left school, and elected to play his senior season at Fork Union Military Academy. The OSU coaching staff was aware months ago that Turner had left Fork Union early this year...without the proverbial cap and gown, and by that time there was no real chance he would play at OSU in 2010, if ever.

Remarkably, this was the *second* time Turner had been shot in Youngstown in the last three

months. Earlier this year he took two slugs in the leg and ankle as a back seat passenger in a car that was involved in more Y-town gun play...fortunately, and as it turned out, temporarily...avoiding debilitating injury. This time, football is an afterthought...survival is the hope.

By all accounts, Jamel Turner is a good kid who had some hellish life and family circumstances to deal with. No doubt he brought some of his troubles on himself, but the tragedy is that Jim Tressel might have turned the kid's life around if he had gotten him under his wing a little sooner. Clearly getting him out of Youngstown was a crucial Step One, and that didn't happen soon enough.

Waiting Game for Smith

Another of the incoming 2010 recruits didn't report with the other freshman players on Monday, and the academic status of running back Rod Smith is now in question. Smith's name didn't appear in the database of incoming freshmen students enrolling for summer quarter, prompting assumptions that he has not yet met OSU's academic entry requirements.

Smith is one of the more heralded of the OSU recruits for 2010. All the scouting services ranked him among the top 7-10 high school running backs in the country coming out of (Ft. Wayne) Paul Harding H.S. Smith's grade issues have been much discussed during the offseason, so this is not an unexpected development. And this *does not* mean that Smith will not ultimately get enrolled at OSU. He was reportedly very close to making the grades he needed...so close it was coming down to one test in one course to make or break him. He could possibly wait till August and enroll for fall quarter if, for example, a summer class could help to qualify him. Stay tuned.

Update: Asked by reporters about Smith's status on Tuesday morning, Tressel replied "We were hoping he'd be here for the summer, but he's got to finish up at school so he couldn't meet the deadline to get in here June 21st when we began. So it will be August 5th".

Regardless of what eventuates with Rod Smith, neither he nor Wells would have made a significant contribution to the 2010 team on the field, and as we have seen, Turner wasn't coming to Columbus under any circumstances. That leaves Carter's loss as the only one apt to be felt on the field for this year's Buckeyes, and even that should be minimized by a deep receiver corps that includes upperclassmen Taurian Washington and Grant Schwartz along with impressive redshirt freshman Chris Fields and speedy sophomore James Jackson .

The chances of early playing time also just got a bit better for incoming freshmen receivers James Louis, Tyrone Williams and Corey Brown. And those are the guys who were lined up *beh ind*
Carter. DeVier Posey and Dane Sanzenbacher will be getting most of the snaps in the base offense in any event. This team will not be sweating a changeover of their #3 wideout.

Silver Lining

I promised some good news if you stuck with me, so here it is, if you haven't heard it already. T yler Moeller
, the senior linebacker who sat out all of 2009 after undergoing brain surgery as a result of a mugging, has been medically
cleared to play football
this fall for the Buckeyes. Moeller was projected as a probable starter at linebacker last summer before the injury, but he'll be utilized as a safety for the Bucks this year, and will almost surely be considered as well for the Star position, the hybrid LB/S spot that OSU has been using instead of a third linebacker on nearly 50% of their defensive snaps.

Moeller is an instinctive and tenacious pass rusher and an excellent tackler, and if he is close to 100% physically and mentally, it means that an already impressive OSU defense just got even better.

Also, in case you missed it a couple weeks ago, the scumbag who sucker-punched Moeller a year ago while the OSU senior was in Florida with his family, has pleaded guilty to felony assault, and will do up to five years for it. Talk about your good news.

OSU Recruits Shine in "Big 33"

Incoming OSU freshmen Christian Bryant and Verlon Reed each scored key touchdowns for Ohio to help the home state guys edge Pennsylvania in the annual
Big 33 Game
in Hershey, PA Saturday night. Reed, who shared quarterbacking duties for Ohio, passed for 55 yards and had a 74-yard TD run to pick up the Ohio MVP award, his second MVP in as many all-star games this summer. Reed is probably a safety eventually at OSU, but he could get a look at WR, and off of the two all-star game performances, I think he should get an early look returning kickoffs as well.

Bryant scored the winning TD with a minute to go, after Pennsylvania had taken the lead with just 1:30 on the clock. Bryant scored on a 22-yard pass play for the winning score on a throw from St. Ignatius quarterback Mark Myers. OSU-bound defensive end J.T. Moore had an interception off a tipped ball on the game's first play from scrimmage.

Recruiting Update

The 2011 OSU recruiting class has grown by four commitments since the beginning of June.

Braxton Miller , *(pictured above)* the nation's #1-ranked quarterback, made it official on June 3, selecting Ohio State over ...well...pretty much everyone else in college football. See more on Miller in an earlier Buckeye Leaves . Miller has been a Buckeye at heart all his life, and Jim Tressel has showered him with Buckeye love for years. This was a no-brainer, and the early commitment should help the staff close out a great class.

Evan Spencer , a wide receiver from Chicago, and the son of former-Buckeye Tim Spencer, gave his commitment to the coaches on June 7. Spencer (6' 1", 185) is ranked among the top receivers nationally (#35 Rivals, #20 Scout), and based on his highlight film , he shows the versatility and athleticism to play running back or defensive back as well.

Joel Hale , a 6" 4", 290 lb. defensive tackle from Indiana, joined the OSU class on June 7. Hale is the fifth defensive lineman in what looks like an outstanding group for 2011. It's possible that Hale will end up on the offensive line at OSU, but he's being recruited as a DT.

Devin Smith , a 6' 1", 215 lb. wide receiver from Massillon, had assembled offers from all of OSU's Big Ten competitors, as well as Notre Dame, WVU and Cincinnati. Then a couple of weeks ago, he came to OSU's summer camp and showed the coaches everything they wanted to see. Smith's impressive showing in camp earned an OSU offer shortly thereafter, and he committed on June 17.

It's time for me to get to work on the annual position group previews for the 2010 Bucks, and then the Big Ten Preview after that. That should keep me busy through July and August, and help get TCF readers primed for the season.

And watch for news soon of the return of the "Buckeye Friday" podcasts, featuring Jesse Lamovsky and yours truly, talking OSU football and college football in general.