Obvious Observations Week 1

The most important part of being a writer is knowing your audience. The audience here at The Cleveland Fan is a discerning group that is not concerned with objectivity or the niceties of the National Media. The audience at The Cleveland Fan is much more interested in straight shooting and going beyond the obvious generalities and crap analysis (based solely on statistics) that plagues most of the large media outlets.

Obvious Observation #1: The Buckeyes displayed a well balanced offense for the first half of the football game. The Buckeyes kicked off their week one contest with Marshall by running the

ball sixteen times and throwing the ball sixteen times in the first half, while running out to a 35-7 lead.

Not so Obvious Conclusion #1: The Buckeyes offensive attack was a lot more diversified than even the balanced attack indicated. Terrelle Pryor threw passes to eight different receivers in the first half alone, giving opposing coordinators a lot to think about. Pryor did an excellent job of checking down and did not force nearly as many passes to Posey as we saw last year. However, there were some questionable decisions on Pryor's part. In particular he forced a ball to Grant Schwartz when he was double covered (it was really more of a heave) and he did hold the ball way to long, so all is not rosy, but things are looking very much like last year's Rose Bowl.

Obvious Observation #2: The Buckeyes are deep at the tailback position. The Buckeyes had five different tailbacks carry the ball for a total of 263 yards on 30 carries yielding an astonishing 8.8ypc. Oh yeah, the NCAA just cleared class of 2010 standout running back Rod Smith to play this year, so I guess the Buckeyes now go six deep at the tailback position.

Not so Obvious Conclusion #2: The Buckeyes gave the ball to five different running backs and the lowest ypc for any of them was Carlos Hyde's single carry for four yards. Excluding Hyde, the next "least efficient" back was Jordan Hall who was "only" able to muster 6.4ypc. It is pretty clear that the Buckeyes are as deep as they have ever been at running back, unfortunately right now it looks like they are deep with good backs, not great ones. Each of the backs brings their own special abilities; Brandon Saine: straightline speed and hands, Jordan Hall: quickness and hands, Boom Herron: toughness and intangibles, Jamaal Berry: quickness and hands, Carlos Hyde: Power. Now if we could morph them together like the Power Rangers we would have a Heisman Trophy winner and all time great. The most promising of the five right now are Hall and Berry, both looked very impressive and elusive. However, I doubt either will be able to supplant Saine this year.

Obvious Observation #3: The Buckeyes defense is good, real good. Surprisingly the national nitwits have not quite kept up with the OSU defense this year, and I have actually heard them say that they expect that OSU's defense has taken a step back this year. Yes Mark May, I am talking about you (and your idiot brother Todd McShay).

Not so Obvious Conclusion: I am sure that above mentioned dolts are basing their opinion of the 2010 OSU defense on the losses from last year. In the interest of brevity, I will list the lost

player with his replacement, and then my opinion on the overall status of the position.

Kurt Coleman: replaced on the field by Tyler Moeller, but by position by Jermale Hines. Hines has flashed big play ability from the Star Position, but I think he is more natural as a SS. Moeller's return to the field, makes this whole transition a net positive for the Buckeyes.

Doug Worthington & Todd Denlinger: Most of the reps that these two got will be absorbed by John Simon. Getting additional reps for Simon is a good thing. The worst part of this transaction is the loss of some depth at the "3 technique" tackle position. It looks like Garret Goebel is ready to step up, so overall, I think we are better off as long as Simon is healthy.

Thad Gibson: Nate Williams is better. That said, who replaces Nate Williams as the back up WDE/LEO? Solomon Thomas looked like crap on Thursday night, as a matter of fact, the Buckeyes looked better off in a 3-4 with Big Hank (Jonathan Hankins) as the NT. The real hit here is on the depth chart. Keith Wells is probably kicking himself now.

Austin Spitler: replaced on the field by Andrew Sweat. Sweat will be playing the SAM and since the Buckeyes spend about 60% of their snaps in the Nickel (4-2-5) he is also the first back up to Ross Homan and Brian Rolle. Spitler will never be mistaken for Spielman and to be honest, Sweat was probably better than Spitler last year prior to Sweat's season ending injury.

Andre Amos: When you realized he was leaving did you care? Did you say, "man, that sucks, how are they going to replace Andre Amos?" Odds are you probably said something more like, "Well, that should open up some space on the two deep for some of those studs the Bucks brought in 2008/2009." That is exactly what happened, we went from a known, average commodity, to an unknown commodity in Travis Howard that has a floor roughly around the Amos' ceiling.

Anderson Russell: I was often convinced that the Bucks would be better off playing Cover 1 and just putting 10 guys on the field. I am still trying to figure out how he got beat by Quan Cosby for the clinching touchdown in the Fiesta Bowl. All he had to do was not give up a touchdown, but instead he tried to jump the route (in Cover 0) with no one behind him (note to Anderson Russell, if you are the free safety and you are playing man on the line of scrimmage, odds are that there is no one behind you). It was possibly one of the worst plays ever (not)

made by a safety. I am out of words to describe it. Please watch this to refresh your memory. He will be replace by either CJ Barnett or Orhian Johnson. I prefer Johnson as he is the more physical of the two.

Obvious Observation #4: Jamaal Berry had 7 carries for 80 yards in trash time.

Not so Obvious Conclusion: Berry was the most impressive of all the backs. Granted it was trash time, OSU's third team line against Marshall's second team defense (was there really a difference?), but Berry displayed the burst, quickness and toughness that made him the top RB in the class of 2009. He could have made all those plays on an empty field and I would have been equally impressed the level of competition does not change his speed and his ability to change direction while running at full speed. Let's not forget, he looked great in the jersey scrimmage against OSU's defense too.

Obvious Observation #5: Dennard Robinson looked good in Michigan's opening week victory over Connecticut.

Not so Obvious Conclusion: Rich Rodriguez has found his Pat White and his offense continues to befuddle the Big East three full years after he ditched West Virginia. The real questions here are how long will Dennard Robinson stay healthy toting the rock 30 times a game (there is no Steve Slaton on this Michigan team) and will the offense actually work against a real defense for an entire season? In any case I will have to reevaluate my projected 4-8 season for the Wolverines, they are going to better than that (I am thinking 6-6), but will that be enough to save Rich Rod's job, my gut surprisingly says, "Yes."