Eastern Michigan might not be the worst team in major college football- Western Kentucky makes a very persuasive argument for that title- but if they aren't it doesn't take long to call the roll. So it's not surprising that Ohio State made mincemeat of the Artists Formerly Known as the Hurons last Saturday in the Horseshoe.

What is surprising is the magnitude of the victory. In slaughtering their hapless visitors 73-20, the Buckeyes ran up their highest single-game point total in sixty years. Six Buckeyes scored ten touchdowns, led by Dane Sanzenbacher who had a game for the ages; Terrelle Pryor got into the end zone by land and by air; three different players, including a running back, threw touchdown passes, and a total of 22 players gained yardage either by running the ball or catching it. It was truly a day for star and scout-teamer alike.

On the flip side, the defense did show some weakness at the game's midpoint, particularly the thin and injury-depleted secondary. But with Illinois and Indiana coming up there's time to get healthy back there. And the way Ohio State's offense was scoring on Saturday the Buckeyes could have played the game without a defense and still won going away.

The Sixty-Year Storm: Ohio State's 73 points on Saturday were the most the Buckeyes have scored in a game since Wes Fesler's last team hung 83 on Iowa on October 28, 1950.

It was over when: Terrelle Pryor ripped off a 53-yard touchdown run less than two minutes into the game. That made it 7-0 Ohio State, and the floodgates were opened.

Terrelle Pryor's Line: 20-of-26 for 224 yards and four touchdowns; seven carries for 104 yards and a touchdown; one catch for 20 yards and a touchdown. This was a day to run up numbers and the big junior from Jeanette did just that. No one for Eastern Michigan had a prayer of stopping him.

Merry Dane: Speaking of running up numbers, Dane Sanzenbacher went to a place very few Buckeye receivers- two, to be exact- have gone. 'Lil Dane racked up nine receptions for 108 yards, and his four touchdown catches tied a record held by Bob Grimes (1952 against Washington State) and Terry Glenn (1995 against Pitt .) Glenn's performance was more spectacular- he had 253 receiving yards and several highlight-reel catches as well as a two-point conversion- but, well, four touchdown catches are four touchdown catches.

Fancy Play of the Day: Late in the third quarter, with Ohio State nursing a 45-20 lead, the Vest let his hair down on the play-calling end. Pryor pitched to former high-school teammate Jordan Hall, who ran right and threw back to his left to a wide-open Pryor for a 20-yard touchdown. No doubt the purpose of the play was to give future Buckeye opponents something to think about, although there is, of course, no chance in Hades they'll actually run it against anyone with a pulse.

Young Bucks Run: If Ohio State fans are clamoring to see more of Jordan Hall and Jaamal Berry, it's tough to blame them. Both youngsters shone in relatively extended action on Saturday. Hall rushed for 26 yards on four carries, turned a Joe Bauseman dump-off into a 17-yard touchdown and threw the scoring strike to Terrelle Pryor; Berry racked up 74 yards on four carries and raced 67 yards for a touchdown midway through the fourth period. Freshman Carlos Hyde pitched in with 32 yards on five carries. Boom Herron (12 carries for 55 yards and a score) will stay the top ground option but it's getting increasingly difficult to see Brandon Saine hold off Hall or Berry as the number-two man. Saine has averaged a lowly 2.4 yards per carry the last three weeks and has more value as a receiver out of the backfield than as a runner.

Uncharacteristic Outing: If there was a downside to Saturday's blowout it was the somewhat lackluster effort of Ohio State's usually airtight defense. The Silver Bullets gave up as many

touchdowns to Eastern Michigan as they had in the first three games combined (three.) All three came at the end of lengthy drives and consisted mostly of EMU quarterback Alex Gillett taking advantage of a depleted Buckeye secondary. The fact that Oho State still had most of its defensive starters in the game early in the fourth quarter when it was 52-20 speaks volumes. Even so, the Buckeyes were tough to run on: Eastern rushed for just 40 yards and averaged a tiny 1.4 yards per carry on the day.

Around the Nation

Game of the Week- Alabama/Arkansas: Great teams aren't always great- they're just great when they have to be. Certainly Alabama wasn't great for long stretches of its road test at Fayetteville. The Tide trailed the Razorbacks 20-7 late in the third quarter, with the partisan crowd of 76,808 in full throat and Ryan Mallett looking like every bit of the Heisman candidate he was purported to be. At this point Alabama's number-one ranking and 27-game regular-season winning streak looked to be in serious jeopardy.

Then the Tide showed its championship mettle. Greg McElroy, the Craig Krenzel of Dixie, shrugged off two early interceptions and kept his supreme cool. Nick Saban adjusted his defense, sending more pressure at Mallett and forcing him into mistakes. Mark Ingram continued to pound away at the Arkansas defense. In the last twenty minutes Alabama went 4-of-6 on third down, 1-of-1 on fourth down, controlled the ball for 15:47 and scored 17 unanswered points.

And at the end of the day it was the Razorbacks- namely, Mallett- who cracked under the pressure. The Arkansas quarterback threw two brutal interceptions in the last five minutes, the first setting up Alabama's go-ahead touchdown, the second short-circuiting the last Razorback comeback attempt. When it was over Mallett's Heisman candidacy, and the SEC West title hopes of his team, were in ruins. But Alabama stood tall, still the team to beat.

Nasty Boise: The story from Spud Country wasn't still another win for the Boise State Broncos on their Smurf Turf. Their 37-24 conquest of Oregon State was no surprise; Boise was the better team and showed it. What was surprising was the way they went about it- with eight

penalties, numerous scuffles and a head-shot that knocked Beaver star James Rodgers out of the game. This wasn't the Little Team That Can. This was a full-fledged bully throwing its weight around.

In his analysis of Saturday night's game CFN's Matthew Zemek compared the Broncos to the Miami team that humiliated Texas amid 16 penalties in the infamous 1991 Cotton Bowl. It's an apt comparison. But somehow I get the feeling this kind of behavior isn't a new development for Boise, especially on the blue carpet. You don't run up the kind of home record the Broncos sport by playing nice with anyone. Something tells me the likes of Louisiana Tech and New Mexico State have been dealing with this side of Chris Peterson's team for a long time.

It would be really interesting to see a big-time physical team- an Alabama, a Nebraska, an Ohio State- come to Boise. Yes, Pac-10 Champion Oregon played there last season, but at that time the Ducks were a team somewhat in disarray, with a rookie head coach and an identity it had yet to find. The Broncos have pushed around nearly everyone it has played at home, and done it with impunity. Let's see how they do against a team they *can't* push around.

Not a One-Team League: Don't look now, but Boise State isn't the only Western Athletic Conference team making noise these days. The Nevada Wolf Pack is 4-0 and in the Top 25 after dispatching BYU on Saturday and its leader, as usual, was multi-talented quarterback Colin Kaepernick. The 6'6" senior from Turlock, California threw for 196 yards, ran for 82 and accounted for two touchdowns in Nevada's road conquest of the Cougars and is on pace for a third straight season of over 2,000 yards passing and 1,000 yards rushing. Nevada represents the best chance for Boise to lose a game down the stretch: the Broncos visit Reno on November 26th.

Comeback Kids: The Alabama-Birmingham Blazers are 1-3 at the end of September, but you have to give them credit for never giving up on a football game. Two weeks ago the Blazers stormed back from a 23-0 first-half deficit to stun Troy on a last-play Hail Mary; last Saturday they overcame a 23-7 third-quarter deficit to force overtime at Tennessee. UAB wound up falling 32-29 to the Volunteers in double-overtime but the Blazers dominated statistically, outgaining their hosts 544-287 and losing mainly because kicker Josh Zahn went 2-of-7 on field-goal attempts. It hasn't translated into consistent victories but head coach Neil Callaway has them fighting to the last down in Birmingham.

Heartbreak Kid: Cincinnati had a golden opportunity to pick up one of the biggest victories in program history over Oklahoma last Saturday. But the best efforts of the Bearcats were doomed by a couple of devastating errors on the part of D.J. Woods. The junior receiver from Strongsville had seven catches for 171 yards and a touchdown, but it was two plays he *didn't* make that killed Cincinnati's upset bid. Early in the second quarter Woods got behind the Oklahoma defense and looked to be on his way to a 78-yard touchdown reception that would have given the Bearcats the lead, only to have the ball poked out and recovered in the end zone for a touchback.

Cincinnati kept fighting, cutting a 24-9 Oklahoma lead to 24-22 in the fourth quarter. Unfortunately Woods then made his second and most damaging mistake, muffing a punt at his own seven-yard line. The Sooners quickly capitalized on the turnover, scoring the touchdown that put the game away. The Bearcats wouldn't have been in a position to win without the positive contributions of D.J. Woods. But his mistakes- as well as an end-zone interception and a fumble in Oklahoma territory by quarterback Zach Collaros- were too costly to overcome.

Winners of the Week

Army: The Black Knights moved to 3-1 for the first time since 1996- the last year they appeared in a bowl game - with an opportunistic 35-21 victory over Duke. Rich Ellerson's team took advantage of five Blue Devil turnovers, turning the miscues into 28 points.

Colorado State: The Rams snapped their 12-game, 371-day losing streak on Saturday by coming from behind to defeat Idaho, 36-34. Kicker Ben DeLine atoned for his missed game-tying extra point moments earlier by drilling a 35-yarder at the gun for the winning margin. The Rams had better not get overly acquainted with victory, though: TCU comes to Fort Collins next week.

North Carolina State: The 'Pack is 4-0 for the first time since 2002 thanks to yet another brilliant passing day from Russell Wilson. The junior from Richmond, Virginia touched up

Georgia Tech for 333 yards and three touchdowns without an interception- the third time in four games he has breached 300 through the air this season. N.C. State is now the last undefeated team in the ACC and can make a big statement this week with revitalized Virginia Tech visiting Raleigh.

Stanford: The Cardinal snapped a seven-game losing streak in South Bend and moved to 4-0 for the first time since 1986 with a 37-14 rout of Notre Dame. Andrew Luck didn't play up to his usual standards, throwing two interceptions, but he got plenty of help: Stepfan Taylor rushed for 108 yards, two-way man Owen Marecic scored on offense and defense and the Cardinal defense kept the Irish out of the end zone until late in the fourth quarter. This week Stanford visits Oregon in the game that may very well decide the Pac-10 Championship.

Tate Forcier: Little Man Tate has been a forgotten man in the wake of Shoelace Robinson's brilliant start, but when Robinson went down with a minor knee injury and backup Devin Gardner was ineffective early in Saturday's meeting with Bowling Green, last year's hero of September was ready. Forcier went a perfect 12-of-12 on pass attempts; ran for another 30 yards and directed an offense that found the end zone on five consecutive possessions. The Wolverines ran up 721 yards of offense- 466 on the ground- in their 65-21 punishment of the Falcons.

Losers of the Week

South Carolina: A fourth-quarter meltdown turned what would have been a huge road win at Auburn into a colossal disappointment for the Ole' Ball Coach. The Gamecocks turned the ball over four times in the final stanza as they saw a 27-21 lead disappear. As usual for the USC of the East the onus was on the quarterbacks: Stephen Garcia, who was superb in the first three quarters, lost two fumbles in the fourth while understudy Connor Shaw was picked off twice to end South Carolina's final two forays. Meanwhile, Auburn's Pryor-esque field general Cam Newton was flawless, throwing for 158 yards, running for 176 and accounting for all five Tiger touchdowns with his arm and legs.

Texas: It wasn't quite a reprise of Rout 66 , but UCLA's 34-12 thumping of Texas was shocking in its own right. The once-innocuous Bruins forced five turnovers, manhandled the top-ranked Longhorn rush defense for 264 yards on the ground and held Texas out of the end zone until the two-and-a-half-minute mark of the fourth period. The Longhorns came into the afternoon a shaky 3-0 with unimpressive victories over Rice, Wyoming and Texas Tech. But no one could

have expected a defeat of this magnitude.

Georgia: The Bulldogs are now 0-3 in the SEC after suffering their first loss to Mississippi State since 1974. The next four weeks are potentially forgiving, with Colorado, Tennessee, Vanderbilt and Kentucky on the slate- but Mark Richt's team can't take anyone for granted in the wake of its disastrous opening month.

The Big East: West Virginia's loss to LSU, Rutgers's loss to North Carolina, Cincinnati's loss to Oklahoma and Pitt's rout at the hands of Miami put the capper on a fiasco of a September for the BCS conference-that-shouldn't be. Not a single Big East team resides in the Top 25 at the moment, as opposed to two each out of the Mountain West and WAC. Good thing this league is an automatic qualifier; if it wasn't the champion would have "late December bowl" written all over it.

Minnesota: The Gophers suffered their third straight defeat at TCF Bank Stadium, this one a decisive 34-23 setback at the hands of Northern Illinois. Tim Brewster is in major trouble with a tough Big Ten slate upcoming.

Next Week: Saturday at noon, the Buckeyes open up Big Ten play against Illinois in Champaign. Playtime is over. The real season is about to begin.