

3 NEW OSU BOOKS TAKE THE FIELD

Consider them a warm-up for tomorrow's championship game

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12-0: AN INSIDER'S ACCOUNT OF OHIO STATE'S 2006 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON. By Steve Snapp. Triumph Books. 127 pages. \$14.95.

GAME DAY. Athlon Sports. 148 pages. \$24.95.

GREATEST MOMENTS IN OHIO STATE FOOTBALL HISTORY. By Bruce Hooley. 214 pages. \$19.95.

Yeah, you're a big Ohio State football fan.

You're ready for tomorrow night's national championship game against Florida. There's a giant inflatable Brutus the Buckeye standing in your living room and a script Ohio painted on your lawn. You've been preparing for this game for weeks and talking about it for even longer.

Like you, Triumph Books is so confident this will be a season to remember, it's not even waiting until it's over to begin reminiscing.

Eager to cash in on Buckeye fever, the Chicago-based publisher has released several OSU football-related books in recent months, including *12-0: An Insider's Account of Ohio State's 2006 Championship Season*. (That would be Big Ten championship season at this point.)

The book is a mix of big, colorful photos that are paired with recaps of the season, from the spring practices to the unforgettable Michigan game. Written by OSU sports information director Steve Snapp, the book is a nice - and very readable - way to think back on a great season.

There are some interesting insider tidbits, such as how the school ran its Heisman Trophy campaign this year or how former walk-on Antonio Smith asked to be penciled in as a starter following spring ball in order to be included in the upcoming John Madden video game.

There are a few technical glitches, too, including some obvious typos, probably the result of bringing the book to press so soon after the end of the regular season. The paperback's other drawback, of course, is that it will be outdated by the end of tomorrow night's championship game.

A more timeless publication by Triumph is its hardcover book, *Game Day*. For the casual fan who loves the team but could use a basic primer on OSU football lore, this is a sort of Buckeye Football for Beginners.

The book chronicles the great games, coaches, and traditions associated with Ohio State, though there seems to be a bit of a bias toward the team's more recent accomplishments.

There are explanations of everything from the team colors to the Gold Pants (all players who beat Michigan get a "Gold Pants" trinket, based on a coach's 1934 statement that the Wolverines put on their pants one leg at a time, just like everybody else). A section at the end adds statistical leaders, bowl records, and more.

Sprinkled within is some great trivia. Everyone knows Ohio State has a proud tradition of winning the Heisman, from quarterback Troy Smith this year to running back Archie Griffin twice in the '70s. But how many people can tell you that Les Horvath, who won in 1944, was the only winner who didn't play college football the previous season? (He sat out to enroll in dental school.)



Ohio State's victories this season include a win over Northwestern. (THE BLADE)

Many of the university's other great players are here, with brief descriptions and photos. Sometimes, though, the information is too scant and leaves the reader wanting more.

To those Buckeyes who want to move on to full "expert fan" status, there's always another book, *Greatest Moments in Ohio State Football History*. This paperback sets out to chronicle the most important games played by OSU, offering newspaper game recaps that were printed at the time.

It's an interesting idea on several levels. The recaps portray the teams and players as they were seen back then, without the hindsight of history. There's exuberance and emotion as sports writers get caught up in the excitement of the day (and some overwrought writing; it's fascinating to trace the genre's evolution as the book goes on).

The downside is that there's also no sense of where things are going. The games stand out as islands, often unconnected to the rest of the season or their place in college football's pantheon. To its credit, the book doesn't only include wins among its greatest moments, but it does leave out some important losses. Picking out certain games, while practical, leads to gaps that can be bewildering.

A handful of essays focus on big names of the game, from coach Paul Brown to gigantic offensive lineman and Sandusky native Orlando Pace. These do a good job of providing perspective, but seem haphazard in the way they are sprinkled in.

The book's format also begs the question: How much do you really care about how the Buckeyes scored their first touchdown in a 38-0 win over Michigan in 1935?

Still, this book and the others make great ways to relive the good times and players you remember in OSU football history - and to become acquainted with many of the ones you don't.

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