

College Football

# Buckeyes open spring practice amidst questions

COLUMBUS (AP) — While Jim Tressel's NCAA violations hang like a specter over his program, the Buckeyes begin spring practice faced with a number of other key questions. "It's going to be a little bit different team," Tressel said in an understatement on Wednesday, addressing the on-the-field product

after apologizing for what he termed his "mistakes" off it. "There are some folks who have played a lot of football who aren't here anymore. There is a tremendous amount of leadership that isn't here anymore. We're going to miss a whole bunch of guys, which gives a lot of opportunity for the next group."

Spring workouts began Thursday afternoon with Tressel, facing at least a five-game suspension to start the 2011 season, stalking the field with a whistle around his neck. The Buckeyes worked out indoors in shorts, shoulder pads, jerseys and their spiffy new camo-print helmets.

The Buckeyes, who went 12-1 last year, have been hit heavily by graduation, and also by suspensions with five standouts including starting quarterback Terrelle Pryor suspended for the first five games for accepting improper benefits. Pryor would have missed spring workouts regardless, after surgery on his right

ankle in January. He was finally out of the protective boot he's been wearing. Pryor was standing behind the offense during the workout, shouting encouragement. At one point, he was explaining a play to highly touted freshman quarterback Braxton Miller.

All of the others who will sit out the first five games are taking an active part this spring, including wide receiver DeVier Posey, offensive lineman Mike Adams, tailback Dan Herron and defensive lineman Solomon Thomas. Tressel extravagantly praised their work ethic and their leadership during winter workouts.

Baseball

## Trojans



Troy's Dhaval Shah makes contact Thursday against Beaver Creek.

**CONTINUED FROM B1** the pitcher really. Against Centerville (Tuesday, a 3-1 loss), we didn't have that. We were only up one," said Barkett, who pitched against the Elks. "Getting up by two, that puts a lot less pressure on Doug and makes it easier for him to just go out and throw strikes. It was good to get him some runs today."

"We talked after that Centerville game, and we said we had to come out and do something hitting-wise," Burchfield said. "Trey's clutch hit — that was just a big confidence booster for me."

Burchfield went the distance, scattering six hits and no walks while striking out five on 83 pitches.

"After our scrimmages, I felt confident in myself, confident with all of my pitches," Burchfield said. "My curveball was a little iffy today, but it definitely helped out."

"The key was Burchfield throwing a heck of a game. Doug threw strikes, he got ahead of hitters, he did everything a pitcher has to do," Troy coach Ty Welker said. "That's going to be our trademark this year — we're going to play good defense and pitch well."

Three of Beaver Creek's six hits came with two outs in the top of the second, though, and with runners



Troy's Devin Blakely heads back to first base during a rundown Thursday against Beaver Creek at Market Street Field.

on second and third the Beavers dropped a meek roller down the third-base line for an infield single that plated the game's first run.

But Burchfield worked his way out of two more two-out situations, handling the pressure and stranding a runner on second in the third and one on first in the top of the fourth. And then it was the Trojan's (2-1) turn to put the pressure on.

Nick Antonides drew a one-out walk in the bottom of the fourth, and wild pitch put Nathan Helke on second base after a fielder's choice. Jordan Guillozet then beat out an infield single and the Beaver Creek first baseman misplayed

the late throw, allowing Helke to score the tying run.

Another walk in the bottom of the fifth kicked off a two-out Trojan rally, as Devon Alexander drew one on four pitches. Devin Blakely then worked a walk out of a full count, and Alexander took third on an errant pick-off attempt to put runners on the corners and bring up Barkett. Blakely stole second, and Barkett hit a floating line drive over the second baseman's head.

He leapt up for it, but it was just out of reach and over his glove, plating both runs.

"I was just hoping it would stay up enough to get over his head, and it

did," Barkett said. "We've been wanting to put the ball in play with guys in scoring position," Welker said. "Trey did that against Centerville, too, and drove in our only run. We need guys to step up. When you put pressure on the other team, that's what can happen."

And with all the pressure off of him, Burchfield cruised through the final two innings, striking out the final two batters of the game to ice it.

Troy remains at home today, hosting Miamisburg. **BCreek...010 000 0 — 1 6 2**  
**Troy...000 120 x — 3 3 0**  
Girard and Betsinger. Burchfield and Swigard. WP — Burchfield. LP — Girard. **Records:** Beaver Creek 0-2, Troy 2-1.

Major League Baseball



Cincinnati Reds' Ramon Hernandez (55) is greeted by teammates at home plate after hitting the game-winning three-run home run off Milwaukee Brewers relief pitcher John Axford in the ninth inning Thursday in Cincinnati. The Reds won 7-6.

## Reds

**CONTINUED FROM B1** The Brewers became the first team in 42 years to open the season with back-to-back homers when Rickie Weeks and Carlos Gomez connected off Edinson Volquez. Ryan Braun also had a solo shot, helping Milwaukee take a 6-3 lead to the ninth.

That's when the Reds reverted to their winning ways of 2010. Their first six wins last season came in their final at-bat, tying the major league record. Appropriately, they clinched the division title at home on Jay Bruce's game-ending homer.

They began the new season with only the second game-ending homer in Reds opening-day history. Joe Randa beat the Mets with one in 2005.

"I've never seen an opening day like that," said Dusty Baker, who won his first opener in four years as the Reds manager. "I've seen a guy hit a homer to start the game, but I've never seen the first two guys hit homers."

"That was about as dramatic a finish as you

can have, especially ending the season the way we did last year and then starting it the same way this year."

The Brewers were leading by three before John Axford (0-1) let it get away. He blew only three save chances last season, when he set a Milwaukee rookie record with 24 saves.

Hernandez hit an opposite-field line drive that set off a familiar Reds scrum at home plate.

"It seemed like he got a good piece if it, but I wasn't too sure," Axford said. "It sounded a little different."

The next sound he heard was a collective scream from what remained of the crowd of 42,398 many had left on a cold, raw afternoon. Hernandez's homer was the last of six in the game, the only one that wasn't a solo shot.

The 41-degree first pitch made for the second-coldest opener in Great American Ball Park's nine-year history, prompting fans to bundle in coats and blankets. Volquez warmed up wearing a red hooded sweatshirt.

Baseball/Softball

## Roundup

**CONTINUED FROM B1** Tippecanoe plays Fort Walton Beach Friday.

**Tipp...130 400 3 — 11 15 5**  
**RBurg...100 001 0 — 2 6 2**  
Muse and Putnam. Hedrick, Gibson (5) and Barrett. WP — Muse. LP — Hedrick. 2B — Goulette (T), Price (T), Gingerich (T), Murray (R), Gibson (R). **Records:** Tippecanoe 1-1, Reynoldsburg 0-1.

**Mosley...021 000 3 — 6 8 1**  
**Tipp...310 102 x — 7 9 4**  
Johnson, Hughes (7) and Putnam. Hair, Thompson (6) and Irving. WP — Johnson. LP — Hair. 2B — Clack (T), Goulette (T), Gingerich (T), Irving (M), Quinoy (M). 3B — Goulette (T). HR — Goulette. **Records:** Mosley 8-5, Tippecanoe 2-1.

**Miami East 4, Versailles 2**  
**TROY** — Miami East didn't score often Thursday. But when the Vikings did, they made it count.

The Vikings scored all four of their runs in the fourth inning and made big plays down the stretch to hold off Versailles for a 4-2 victory Thursday at Duke Park.

And none of those plays were bigger than Zach Denlinger's catch with the game on the line in the sixth inning.

"Zach caught a liner in left field and converted a double play in the sixth," Miami East coach Barry Coomes said. "That was the play of the game for us because it prevented a run from scoring."

Bradley Coomes was 1 for 3 at the plate and also got the save on the mound,

while Colton Bowling was 2 for 3, Alex Henry was 1 for 3 with two RBIs, Kevin McMaken was 1 for 3 with an RBI and Logan Durand was 1 for 3 with an RBI.

Henry got the win on the mound for the Vikings as he struck out four, gave up four hits and only one run.

"Alex had a great day for us," Coomes said. "He pitched very well and did well at the plate with two big RBIs."

Miami East will travel to Sidney today to take on the Lehman Cavaliers.

**Versailles.010 000 1 — 2 6 1**  
**ME...000 400 0 — 4 7 1**  
Grillot, Monnin, Clark, Henry (3), Coomes (7) and Fellers. WP — Henry. LP — Grillot. **Records:** Miami East 1-0.

**Stebbins 3, Milton-Union 1**  
**WEST MILTON** — The Milton-Union Bulldogs simply couldn't find their bats Thursday as they struck out 11 times en route to a 3-1 defeat at the hands of Stebbins in West Milton.

"We just didn't hit the ball tonight," Milton-Union coach Jordan Kopp said. "We had two hits tonight, and you just aren't going to win games like that."

Anthony Staas was a bright spot for the Bulldogs, going 2 for 2.

"Anthony has shown great senior leadership for us so far," Kopp said. "He has hit the ball well and played great defense. We need the other guys to follow his example."

The Bulldogs play Tri-County North at home today.

**Graham 2, Covington 1**  
**ST. PARIS** — The Covington baseball team dropped its third straight game of the season by a 2-1 score at Graham on Thursday, but Covington coach Mitch Hirsch sees the potential of a really good ball club.

"The kids are starting to come around," Hirsch said. "We've got five new starters in the lineup and the jitters are starting to go away. Once we start hitting, we'll be pretty good."

Bryton Lear and Steven Blei started off the seventh with back-to-back singles and then Brandon Flora followed with a single to score Lear for the Buccaneers' only run.

The Buccs travel to Lehman for a Saturday doubleheader. **Covington.000 000 1 — 1 3 1**  
**Graham...100 100 x — 2 5 1**  
LP — Angle. **Records:** Covington 0-3.

**Piqua 5, Fairborn 3**  
**FAIRBORN** — Piqua jumped out to a 3-0 lead but still needed two seventh-inning runs to complete a 5-3 road win over Fairborn Thursday night in GWOC Crossover action, improving the Indians to 2-0 on the season.

Trent Hemm was 2 for 5 with a run scored and two stolen bases. Aaron Christy had an RBI and scored a

run, while Jake Causey was 1 for 3 with a run scored. Brad Jess had a triple and scored a run and Brandon Wright was 1 for 3 with one RBI.

Andy Draving got the win, striking out five and walking four. Brad Jess and Taylor Huebner each pitched an inning of relief and trio combined on a nine-hitter.

Piqua will host Tecumseh in a doubleheader Saturday.

**Piqua...210 000 2 — 5 7 2**  
**Fairborn...000 110 1 — 3 9 4**  
Draving, Jess (6), Huebner (7) and Wright. Hall, Jesse (6) and Johnson. WP — Draving. LP — Hall. 3B — Jess. **Records:** Piqua 2-0.

**Softball**  
**Miami East 4, Versailles 3**  
**CASSTOWN** — The Miami East softball team got a win over Versailles in dramatic fashion Thursday, as Jeni Accurso delivered the game-winning RBI with two outs in the bottom of the seventh to give the Vikings a 4-3 win.

"We started slow, but we were able to string some hits together and gets some runs," Miami East coach Brian Kadel said.

With the score knotted at 3-3 going into the bottom of the seventh, Paige Mullen came through with a game-changing triple that gave the Vikings a chance to win.

Amanda Woolley was 3 for 4 on the day, Madison Linn — the winning pitcher

— was 1 for 2 at the plate with a double and two RBIs, while the hero of the night, Mullen, went 2 for 3 and scored two runs.

The Vikings travel to take on Lehman today.

**Versailles.100 002 0 — 3 9 0**  
**Miami East.000 111 1 — 4 10 1**

Langston, York, Linn, Accurso. WP — Linn. LP — Langston. 2B — Monnin (V), Linn (ME). 3B — McEldowney (V), Mullen (ME). **Records:** Versailles 0-2, Miami East 2-0.

**Milton-Union 7, Stebbins 0**

**WEST MILTON** — Andrea Fetters pitched a gem for Milton-Union, shutting out Stebbins 7-0 in West Milton Thursday night.

Fetters allowed no runs, struck out seven with no walks and only gave up three hits.

"Fetters pitched well," Milton-Union coach Curt Schaefer said. "But we played good 'D' tonight. We just didn't hit the ball well."

The Bulldogs had only five hits in the game. Despite that, the Bulldogs still got the job done, taking advantage of the chances Stebbins gave them.

Sammy Boyd had a double, Monica Burke went 2 for 4 and Haley Martens was 2 for 4.

Milton takes on Tri-County North at home today.

**Stebbins...000 000 0 — 0 3 6**  
**M-U...210 040 x — 7 5 0**  
Fetters, Smith (6), Smith (7) and Boher. WP — Fetters. 2B — Boyd. **Records:** Stebbins 0-2, Milton-Union 2-0.

**Covington 8, Graham 1**

**ST. PARIS** — The Covington Buccaneers broke Thursday's game at Graham wide open with a six-run third inning, beating the Falcons 8-1 to improve to 2-0.

Jessie Shilt went 2 for 4 with a double and two RBIs, while Aubrye Cain also connected on a pair of base hits. Chloe Shell and Hannah Pond each drove in two runs, while Heidi Snipes and Brittanie Flora connected on base hits to score runs.

Shell also got the win, striking out eight.

Covington travels to Lehman for a doubleheader Saturday.

**Covington.006 100 1 — 8 8 1**  
**Graham...000 010 0 — 1 7 1**  
WP — Shell. 2B — Shilt (C). **Records:** Covington 2-0.

**Bradford 15, Miss. Valley 3 (5)**

**BRADFORD** — The Bradford Railroaders are off to a 2-0 start this year after a 15-3 beatdown of Mississinawa Valley Thursday.

Alisha Patti got the win, striking out three, while Sam Bashore doubled — one of only five Bradford hits as the 'Roaders cashed in on nine walks and six errors.

Bradford travels to Botkins today.

**MV...003 00 — 3 3 6**  
**Bradford...380 4x — 15 5 2**  
Wicker and Adkins. Patti and Bashore. WP — Patti. LP — Wicker. 2B — Bashore. **Records:** Bradford 2-0.