

# Tressel dodges questions about Clarett's future

Maurice Clarett was ruled eligible for the NFL Draft on Thursday by U.S. District Court Judge Shira Scheindlin

By Marla Ridenour  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

CANTON, Ohio — Making national headlines on the football field is fine, but Ohio State coach Jim Tressel continues to dodge the subject of Maurice Clarett's future.

Tressel took only one question about the suspended tailback Monday before a crowd of more than 350 at the Pro Football Hall of Fame Luncheon Club at the Four Winds Restaurant in Canton.

He gave an innocuous answer. When reporters surrounded him afterward, he declined to give his reaction to a ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Shira Scheindlin last Thursday that allows Clarett to enter April's NFL Draft.

Perhaps the OSU fans in attendance are tired of the Clarett controversy and didn't feel like grilling Tressel about him. But when Tressel finished a season rundown and spring preview that lasted nearly 50 minutes, the first query from the audience was, "Does Clarett have a chance?"

"Obviously, his chance has doubled in that the court system has said

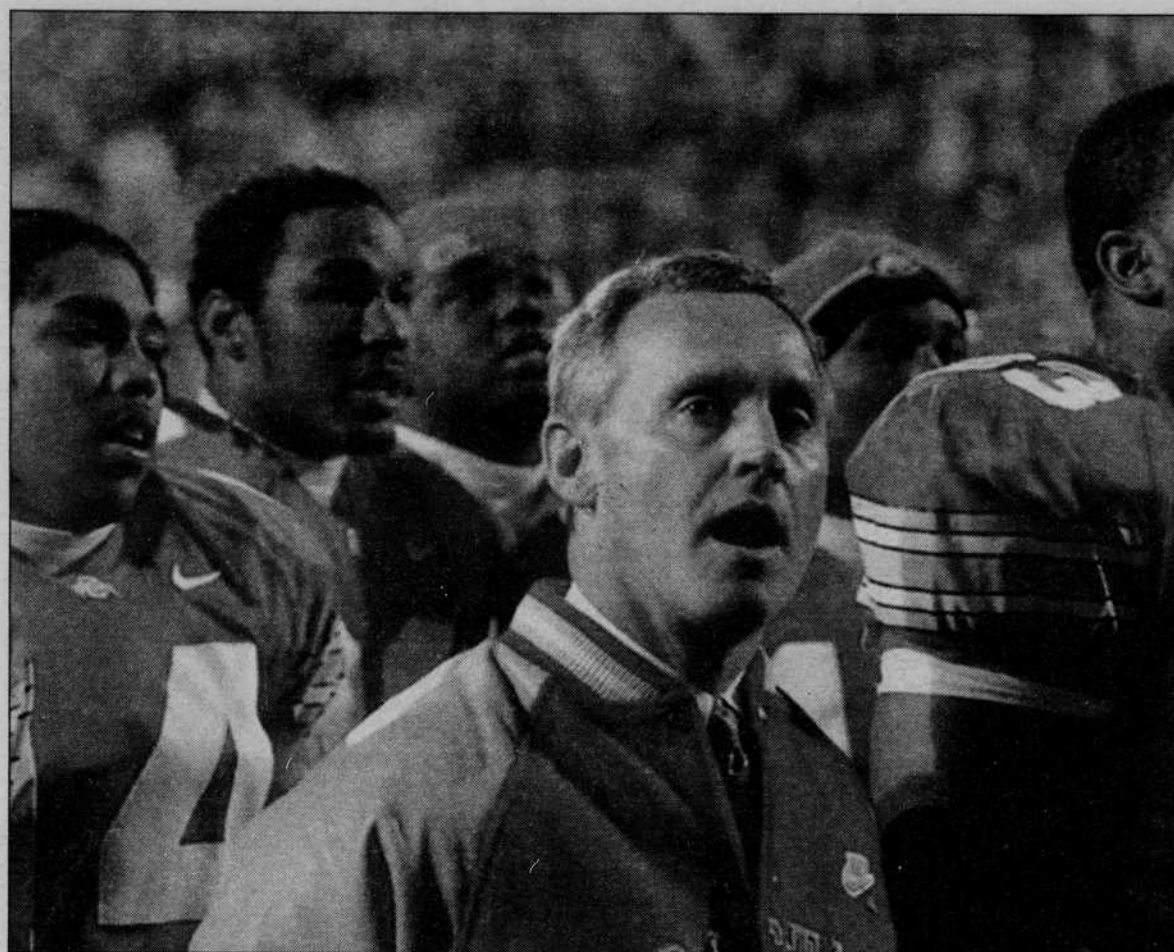
that he is in their minds eligible for the NFL," Tressel said. "As I listen to our people, he has not ended his opportunity to be reinstated in the NCAA. Right now, I guess it could go either way. Which way it will go, I don't know."

A university counsel informed Clarett's attorney, Alan Milstein, that if Clarett formally declares for the draft, he will forfeit his remaining college eligibility. The NFL contends that Clarett already had done that when Milstein faxed the league a letter dated Jan. 11 asking that Clarett be included in the upcoming draft. The NCAA has not determined its position on Clarett's status.

Clarett sat out the entire 2003 season after taking improper gifts and lying about it to NCAA and school investigators. His name hit the news again Feb. 4 when an ESPN.com story reported that Clarett's friend and Warren area benefactor Bobby Dellimuti allegedly had gambled with an off-shore betting service while Clarett led OSU to the 2002 national title.

If Clarett is drafted April 24-25, he might be joined by as many as 12 Buckeyes teammates. Tressel said that's the word he received from pro scouts when he coached in the Hula Bowl in Maui last month.

"I think three — Chris Gamble, Mike Jenkins and Will Smith — will be in the first round," Tressel said.



David Distelhorst Akron Beacon Journal

Jim Tressel (middle front) recently declined to talk much about Maurice Clarett's situation.

Tressel said he wasn't initially sure that junior Gamble had made the right decision when he announced immediately after the Fiesta Bowl he was turning pro. But Tressel has changed his mind and now thinks Gamble might be among the first 15 picks.

As for the 11-game 2004 season, Tressel said he expects a "great quarterback derby" to begin in April with sophomores Justin Zwick and Troy

Smith and grayshirt freshman Todd Boeckman fighting for the top job.

"I feel great about the way Justin Zwick has progressed," Tressel said. "I thought he was ready to go in the middle of the year when Craig (Krenzel) got hurt. (Senior) Scott McMullen had the first opportunity, but really it was negligible who was ahead of whom. If it's that close, typically you're going to go with the older guy.

Scott McMullen bore out that he should have had that opportunity."

Asked what he liked most about Zwick, Tressel said, "Great vision. He's got an awareness and a vision of what's going on out there unlike any guy I've ever been around."

(c) 2004, Akron Beacon Journal (Akron, Ohio). Distributed by Knight Ridder/Tribune Information Services.

## Philadelphia shores up net with acquisition of Burke

The Flyers gave up center Mike Comrie, who had four goals and five assists in 21 games in Philadelphia

By Marc Narducci  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

PHILADELPHIA — On the night that one goalie bid farewell, another is making a return appearance to the Philadelphia Flyers.

In a busy evening, the Flyers acquired goalie Sean Burke from the Phoenix Coyotes in a multiplayer trade. Burke will replace Jeff Hackett, who Monday night announced his retirement. Hackett has been suffering from vertigo.

In addition to Burke, the Flyers acquired rugged right winger Branko Radivojevic and the rights to unsigned draft choice Ben Eager for center Mike Comrie.

Earlier in the day, the Flyers traded defenseman Eric Weinrich to the St.

Louis Blues for a fifth-round choice in the 2004 NHL entry draft.

The Flyers were desperate to shore up their depleted goaltending after Robert Esche suffered a sprained knee ligament on Feb. 2.

"I think with Esche's injury, which isn't real long-term but could be scheduled four to six weeks, and the problems Jeff had, with him deciding to retire, we obviously needed a goaltender," Flyers general manager Bob Clarke said Monday night on a conference call.

During practice yesterday, Flyers coach Ken Hitchcock said Esche was making better-than-expected progress and could be back sooner than the original timetable, which was estimated to be a minimum of three weeks.

"He felt really good today and did a lot of things exercise-wise, and he is kind of hopeful the three-week window that they stated was the minimum, might in fact be the total, so that is really good news," Hitchcock said.

For the second time, Burke is coming to the Flyers as a late-season acquisition. He was acquired by the Flyers from Vancouver in exchange for Garth Snow on March 4, 1998. In 11 regular-season games that year, he went 7-3 with a 2.56 goals-against average. Then he went 1-4 as the Flyers lost an Eastern Conference quarterfinal series to the Buffalo Sabres in five games.

"Burke is a much, much better goaltender and played much better the last three years, and we are a much better team," Clarke said.

Hackett missed the last nine games with vertigo. The 35-year-old went 10-10-6 with a 2.39 goals-against average this season.

Clarke said he didn't want to part with Comrie, who was acquired Dec. 16 from the Edmonton Oilers and played only 21 games for the Flyers.

(c) 2004, The Philadelphia Inquirer. Distributed by Knight Ridder/Tribune Information Services.

## Shockers, Jayhawks may be forced to play

Kansas and Wichita State have not met since the 1992-93 season; the Jayhawks have won 12 of 14

By Adam Knapp  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

WICHITA, Kan. — A bill introduced in the Kansas Legislature would require the University of Kansas and Wichita State University to schedule two men's basketball games against each other, one in each arena.

The man who introduced it, Rep. Todd Novascone, R-Wichita, does not think it will pass.

"I just wanted to get people talking about it," Novascone said Monday. "I'm sick of them not playing each other. Hopefully this will stir up talk, and if we have a hearing I will certainly make my case. It might turn into something."

The schools have not played since the 1992-93 season. They have met 14 times, with KU winning 12.

Novascone, a Baylor University

graduate, did not want his name to appear on the bill alone, so he introduced it as a committee bill through the Tourism and Parks Committee on Friday.

"But word got around pretty quickly that it was me," said Novascone, 31.

"It's fun to talk about. Even some of the KU people are saying, 'Yeah, it has been a long time since they've played.' But the rest are saying, 'Novascone, what are you doing?'"

House Bill 2755 is three paragraphs. It states that KU and WSU would have to play once during the 2005-06 season and once in 2006-07, once in Lawrence and once in Wichita.

Novascone said that would allow both teams time for scheduling. He also thinks the Shockers will have had adequate time to build their program to be competitive with KU.

KU athletic director Lew Perkins said he was unaware of the proposed legislation until Monday.

(c) 2004, The Wichita Eagle (Wichita, Kan.). Distributed by Knight Ridder/Tribune Information Services.

## STRUGGLES

continued from page 7

head Saturday.

Oregon (11-11 overall, 3-9 Pac-10) had been hampered by slow starts earlier in the season, but had appeared to solve the problem of late.

Saturday in Corvallis, however, the Beavers outscored the Ducks 16-2 in the game's first five minutes, essentially sealing Oregon's fate before the Ducks could break a sweat.

Oregon State guard Shannon Howell said Oregon's starting five looked tired and sluggish during the

Beavers' run.

"Once we got ahead 16-2, you could see it on their faces," Howell said after the game. "They looked tired. We were like, 'Oh, look at them, they're tired. Let's go at them some more.'"

Oregon forward Eleanor Haring said there was no reason for the Ducks' miserable start.

"I don't really know what happened. We just came out flat," Haring said. "There's no excuses. We weren't tired."

Oregon battled back to cut the Beaver lead to single digits in the second half, but never overcame the 14-point hole it dug for itself early in the

first half.

Along with the slow start, the Ducks

"Once we got ahead 16-2, you could see it on their faces. They looked tired. We were like, 'Oh, look at them, they're tired. Let's go at them some more.'"

Shannon Howell  
Oregon State guard

were out-rebounded 37-28 and had

more turnovers (15) than assists (13).

Smith said she was disappointed by the loss after the Ducks seemed to improve during the last two weeks.

"I think it is a little bit of a step backwards," Smith said. "It's disappointing in the sense that we had really made some progress."

### Payback in order

Oregon will get a chance to avenge its 95-50 loss to Washington on Jan. 15 at Bank of America Arena when the Huskies come to McArthur Court Saturday.

The loss was the third-worst in school history, trumped by a 65-point

loss to Oregon State and a 50-point loss to Western Washington in 1975.

The Ducks shot 30 percent for the game, were out-rebounded 56 to 32 and allowed five Huskies to score double figures.

Haring, who finished with eight points on 3-of-11 shooting in the loss, said she can't wait to get another shot at Washington.

"I can't really speak for the other girls, but I'm definitely looking to attack this weekend," Haring said. "I really want to get the win."

Contact the sports reporter at jonroetman@dailyemerald.com.