

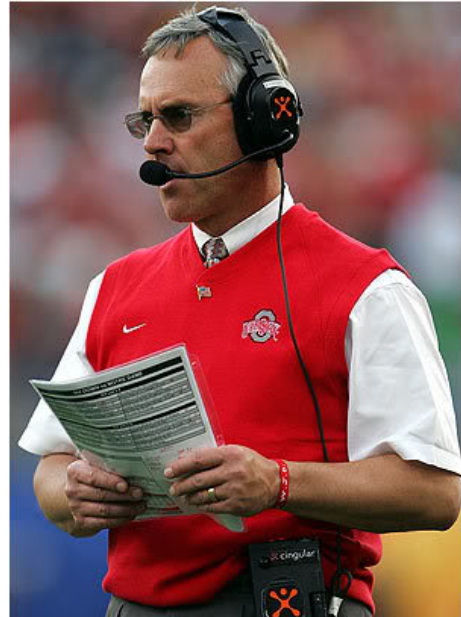
## Bearer Of Bad News

Written by {ga=pup}

Thursday, December 28 2006 7:00 PM -

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Cris Sykes hates to be the bearer of bad news for the Buckeye Nation, but feels he must be the one to do it. He says Jim Tressel is leaving Columbus to come rescue the Browns, and Buckeye fans need to deal with this reality. Sykes lays out the case for the Sweater Vest coming to Cleveland, and is pretty convincing in doing so.



I'm sorry to have to be the one to say it, but The Ohio State University and their fan base had better start preparing for the departure of "The Sweater Vest." There are only so many times in life where all the stars align and a picture is painted so perfectly that one has no choice but to do the inevitable. In this case, the inevitable is Jim Tressel leaving the Buckeyes to become the next head coach of the Cleveland Browns, if the Buckeyes beat Florida on January 8th.

Much has been made of the "out" clause in Tressel's contract and for good reason. This clause did not need to be in there to get a better deal out of Ohio State. He could walk into AD Gene Smith's office on any day of the week, take a leak in the corner before asking for a bigger contract, and get that contract. The Buckeye athletic department has more money than most Fortune 500 companies. They have twice paid over \$100,000 to get new sod at the Horseshoe this year and not even batted an eye at the task or the price tag. Tressel wanted an out, and I expect he wanted it for this year.

Coach Tressel is a very smart man. He knows when he has a team that will be in the running for a National Title. Sure he might have thought it would have been Justin Zwick and Maurice Clarret instead of Troy Smith and Anotnio Pittman, but I believe he had his eye on this season once he signed this recruiting class. Had the Browns flourished under Romeo Crennel, then he would be more than happy to stay in Columbus and continue puppeteering the dynasty. He also knew there was a pretty good chance the Browns would continue to struggle. If they did, then he would have the option to make a move, to his ultimate dream job.

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Tressel is a Cleveland guy. Born in Mentor, raised in Berea. The Browns are near and dear to his heart. As a youngster, Tressel spent days catching kicks from Lou Groza and soaking in the greatest era of football ever known to the Cleveland area. Most feel this is where he got his passion for Ohio State, as Groza was a Buckeye alum. I find it hard to believe he was soaking in all the love of scarlet and gray while not getting any for the brown and orange.

There comes a point where a man has to challenge himself. I wonder if Tressel feels that time is now. When a man spends so much time talking about building blocks, you have to wonder if he is not talking about his own path. Wasn't Youngstown State a stepping-stone to get to Columbus? Then why isn't Columbus a stepping-stone to get to Cleveland?

Jim Tressel is 62-13 at Ohio State. That is winning 83% of your games. Take out the first year 7-5 team and he is 57-8, which is almost a 90% winning percentage. What else can he do? He is 5-1 against That State Up North. He will be 5-1 in bowl games with a win in Glendale. That win would also make him 4-0 in BCS Bowls. Want more? He is 38-10 against the Big Ten. He would be 26-7 against teams in the Top 25. He is 10-2 against teams in the top 10. He would be coming off a year in which he beat the #2 ranked team in the country three times. I cannot see a time where leaving Columbus would make more sense. Having won two National Championships in six years, this would be the perfect time.

Very few people can adapt to their personnel like Tressel. When you look at the differences between his two National Championship teams, you realize the adage "He can take his and beat you, then take yours and beat his" was meant for Jim Tressel. The first title, nobody even expected them to be there, but he used a killer defense and ball control offense to get there before opening it up to pull off one of the biggest upsets on record in a National Championship Game. Now this year, he uses an opportunistic defense and a spread offense to dominate the college football landscape to go wire to wire for the title!

The man has built every football team he has ever been around into a winner. There are some that say the Browns are a lost cause, which I think makes it all the more intriguing to him. There are very few individuals in this world that can win at three different levels of football but "The Sweater Vest", in my opinion, is one of them.

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Most college coaches do not transition very well to the NFL game, but Tressel is different. He is not a “rah-rah” head coach, nor does he get max effort out of his teams by being able to scare a bunch of 18-22 year olds to conforming. He won at Youngstown State and Ohio State in the same manner, out-planning and out-executing the opposition. That is how you win in the NFL.

A lot has to happen for this to come true. First, Ohio State has to beat a pretty good Florida team. Then the Browns have to fire Crennel. Finally, Randy Lerner will have to come up with the right set-up for Tressel to believe the situation is right. The money will not be an issue, but there has to be belief that Lerner is committed to doing it Tressel’s way.

I am sorry to say it Buckeye Nation, but the closer we get to January 8, the more likely it is that this scenario plays out much better for the Browns than the Buckeyes.