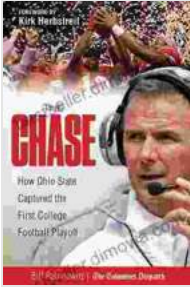


# How Ohio State Captured the First College Football Playoff: A Gripping Journey to Victory



**The Chase: How Ohio State Captured the First College Football Playoff** by Bill Rabinowitz

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5



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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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## **A Season of Trials and Triumphs**

The 2014 season for the Ohio State Buckeyes was a rollercoaster ride of emotions. After a disappointing loss to Virginia Tech in the season opener, the team rallied behind a stout defense and a resurgent offense led by quarterback J.T. Barrett and running back Ezekiel Elliott.

The Buckeyes navigated a challenging schedule, including hard-fought victories over Penn State, Michigan State, and Michigan. Elliott emerged as a dominant force, setting numerous records and solidifying his status as one of the top running backs in the country.

## **The Road to the Playoff**

As the season progressed, Ohio State's dominance became undeniable. The team finished the regular season with a 12-1 record, earning a berth in the inaugural College Football Playoff. They faced Alabama, the top-ranked team in the country, in the semifinals at the Sugar Bowl.

In a thrilling contest, Ohio State overcame a 21-point deficit to stun Alabama and secure a berth in the national championship game. The victory was a testament to the team's resilience and the leadership of

quarterback Cardale Jones, who stepped into the starting role due to an injury to Barrett.

## **The National Championship**

The national championship game pitted Ohio State against the Oregon Ducks, a team known for its high-scoring offense. In a back-and-forth battle, the Buckeyes relied on their suffocating defense to contain Oregon's explosive attack.

Elliott once again played a starring role, rushing for 246 yards and four touchdowns. Jones managed the game effectively, leading the Ohio State offense to critical scores in the second half. The Buckeyes ultimately emerged victorious, capturing their first College Football Playoff championship with a 42-20 triumph.

## **Behind the Scenes: Coach Urban Meyer's Masterclass**

A significant factor in Ohio State's success was the leadership of head coach Urban Meyer. Meyer, a renowned figure in college football, known for his offensive brilliance and ability to motivate his players. Throughout the season, Meyer instilled a relentless mindset in his team, emphasizing discipline, teamwork, and attention to detail.

Meyer's guidance proved crucial in the face of adversity. After the opening loss to Virginia Tech, Meyer challenged his team to respond with determination and unity. He also made bold decisions, such as benching Barrett for Jones in the semifinal game, which ultimately paid off dividends.

## **Player Profiles: The Stars of the Season**

### **Ezekiel Elliott: The Dominating Running Back**

Elliott, a sophomore running back, was the heartbeat of the Ohio State offense. His combination of speed, power, and vision made him virtually unstoppable. Elliott set numerous records during the season, including the NCAA single-season record for rushing yards per game (167.2).

### **J.T. Barrett: The Dynamic Quarterback**

Barrett, a junior quarterback, was the catalyst for Ohio State's high-powered offense. He possessed a strong arm and exceptional mobility, allowing him to make plays with both his arm and legs. Barrett's leadership and poise under pressure were instrumental in the team's success.

### **Cardale Jones: The Season-Saving Star**

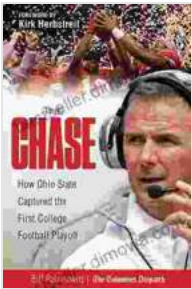
Jones, a redshirt sophomore quarterback, stepped into the starting role in the semifinal game and led Ohio State to victory over Alabama and eventually the national championship. His calm demeanor and ability to execute the offense effectively made him a reliable leader in Barrett's absence.

### **: A Legacy of Triumph**

Ohio State's victory in the first College Football Playoff was a defining moment for the program. The team's resilience, determination, and unwavering belief in one another led them to overcome challenges and achieve their ultimate goal.

The 2014 Buckeyes left an enduring legacy in the annals of college football. Their triumph showcased the importance of teamwork, adaptability, and the power of a team united under a common purpose. Their story serves as an inspiration to athletes and fans alike, reminding us that even

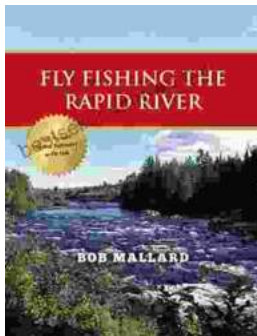
in the face of adversity, dreams can be realized through perseverance and unwavering spirit.



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