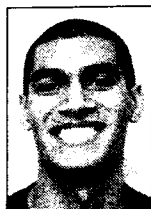


Mascot fights have a home in college sports

By Jared Shanker

Brandon Hanning patiently waited for this day to come for more than a year. He plotted and schemed his way onto the field for a chance to fulfill his dream. And on Saturday, Hanning executed his plan to perfection.



MY OPINION

Brutus Buckeye went down. Brutus Buckeye went down hard. If you haven't seen it yet, put this column down, log onto YouTube and search, "Ohio State Mascot Brutus Buckeye Attacked By Ohio University Mascot." You won't regret it.

Hanning, dressed as a bobcat named Rufus, the Ohio University mascot, watched as Brutus, the Ohio State mascot, ran onto the field with the team's cheerleaders and players to the tune of the Buckeyes' fight song. As Brutus and a male cheerleader ran down the field carrying the Buckeyes' flag, Hanning darted 30 yards and wrapped up Brutus. Built more like an Olympic weightlifter than a tree (the Buckeye is Ohio's state tree), Brutus shed the tackle and kept going.

Rufus, determined to take Brutus out, put his head back on, weaved through cheerleaders and players and jumped on Brutus' back in the end zone. Rufus took him down, put him in a chokehold and gave a swift punch to the head and even attempted a low blow before leaving the scene and pumping up the Ohio band.

"It was actually my whole plan to tackle Brutus when I tried out to be mascot," Hanning told the Associated Press. Hanning did not return calls to the Daily

"When you think college sports, mascot fights don't immediately come to mind. Maybe they should."

Collegian. "I tried out about a year ago, and the whole reason I tried out was so I could come up here to Ohio State and tackle Brutus."

I saw Michigan State eschew a game-tying field goal against Notre Dame and successfully win the game on a fake field goal that resulted in a touchdown this weekend. I saw Arkansas' Ryan Mallett throw a 40-yard touchdown with 15 seconds left to beat Georgia. And I saw Auburn beat Clemson because Clemson missed a field goal in overtime after an illegal snap nullified a successful first field goal.

None of those matched the excitement and pure awesomeness (no actual word can describe the greatness of mascot fights) of seeing Rufus go below the belt on an unsuspecting Brutus.

Why? Because mascot fights are hilarious. The crowd of 105,075 inside Ohio Stadium on Saturday aren't going to remember the 43-7 drubbing the Buckeyes put on the Bobcats. But they will remember Rufus taking a swipe at Brutus' manhood.

I sat in the press box for Penn State's riveting 24-0 win over Kent State. If I weren't getting paid to pay attention, I'd have taken a nice 90-minute nap during the second and third quarters. I even had someone tell me she saw a fan sleeping in the stands on Saturday.

Now, what better way to excite the crowd than to pit the Nittany Lion against Flash, Kent State's bird mascot? It could be billed as the final fight, the final showdown between nature's most intense rivalry: Cat vs. Bird. Let's get Sylvester and Tweety and make it

a tag-team cage match. Offer that to the 100,000 in attendance Saturday and I'm sure more than half would take that over the game, which put people to sleep faster than a warm glass of milk.

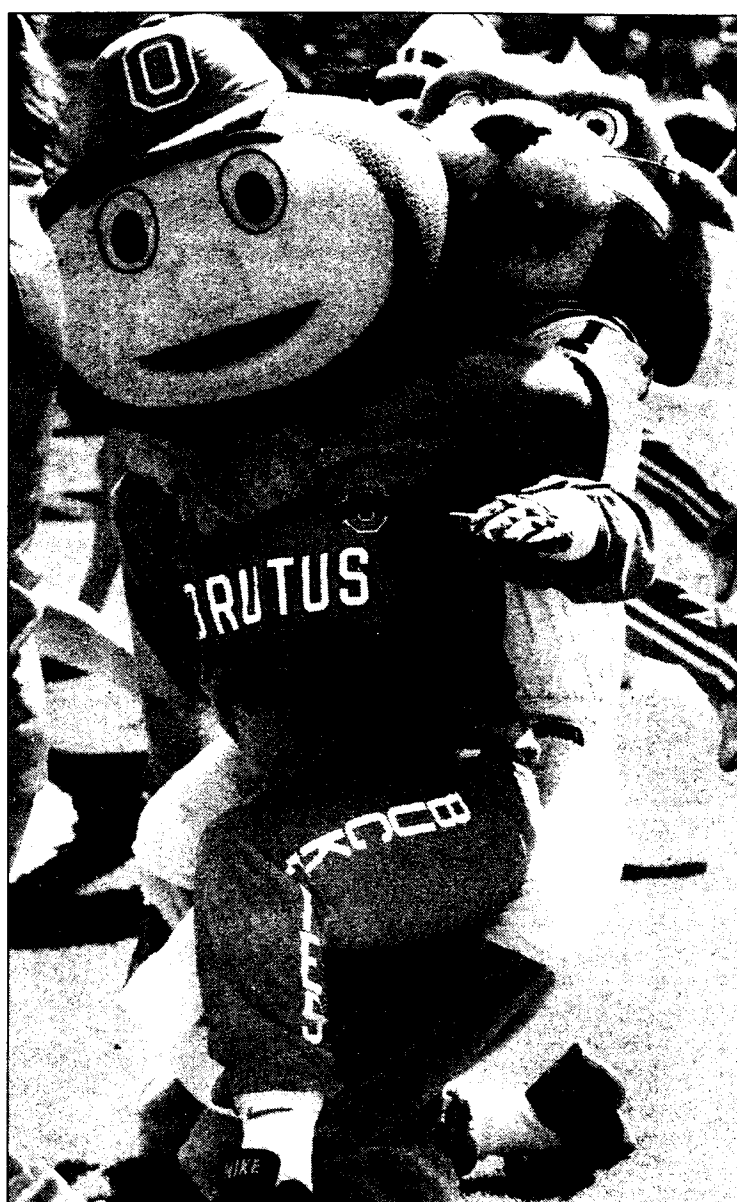
When you think college sports, mascot fights don't immediately come to mind. Maybe they should. A few weeks ago, my column offered 10 reasons explaining why college football is better than the NFL. I regret not making mascot fights one of them.

The Stanford Tree, the most ridiculous — but the best — mascot of all time, squared off with the University of California mascot Oski, a bear. Now how Stanford, which housed two U.S. presidents, came up with this mascot is beyond me. But I'm happy it did. I'm even happier the Tree decided to go toe-to-toe with a Golden Bear.

I'm not sure who keeps records, but I'd like to know how many fights the Oregon Duck has been in. He beat up Houston's mascot on three separate occasions in one game, and then got into an actual fistfight against Oregon State's Benny Beaver. The Duck's got a worse temper than Bill Romanowski.

Usually, the fights are staged and nothing more than a way to waste time and give the fans something to look at during commercials. Those are always entertaining. A lot of times, though, the mascot fights escalate. That's when they become more than hilarious — they become historic.

So while many are condemning Hanning's actions — Ohio administration banned him from athletic events — I applaud it. Hanning's 90-second escapade left a lasting



Neal C. Lauron/Collegian

Brutus (left) gets attacked by Rufus during Ohio State's game Saturday.

impression with me. As for the Penn State-Kent State game, I'm not sure I'll remember anything from it other than that I couldn't believe they served us barbecue chicken legs in the press box.

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By Jacqueline Bigar

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2010: This year, you will make a difference if you can flow with new technology and many different opportunities. You seem to be healthier, more optimistic and more driven than in past years. The attitude that emanates from you is unusual and dynamic. You also could find those you work with to be quirky but interesting. Give others the space to demonstrate who they are. If you are single, you could meet someone in 2011 who is quite significant to your life's history. You find this person challenging but special. Take your time getting to know this particular person. Don't feel as if you must hook up, either! If you are attached, the two of you move in a new direction. You find your sweetie changing right in front of you. Don't hold back; dive in and enjoy the process. PISCES can be most nurturing.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19) *** Just when you thought the lay of the land was one way, you discover it really is taking an alternate course. Many of you could have last-minute events that force your hand. Remain positive. Tonight: Step back from the immediate. How important is it?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) **** You have the best of intentions, as do many people around you. The issue lies in what to do about what is occurring. Your sense of what remains workable and the element of the unexpected walk hand in hand. Tonight:

Honor your energy level. **GEMINI** (May 21-June 20) **** You might be overly questioning someone's judgment. Normally, there is a lot of mutual give-and-take. An unexpected ripple should be expected in just that context, nothing more. Follow through in key talks. Tonight: A must appearance. **CANCER** (June 21-July 22) ***** Keep pushing for what you want in order to deal with what is happening in an appropriate manner. You laugh, and others respond, especially if you can include them in your unusual thought process. Tonight: Follow the music. **LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) *** You might want to review your thoughts and ideas, especially those involving a key issue. One-on-one relating opens up to a new level of understanding. Investigate the possibilities with an eye to the future. Tonight: Go with a surprise idea. **VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) **** Others' ideas could be challenging but also most beneficial. Don't over-react or overthink what is happening with a relationship or several associates. Tonight: Prepare to be surprised. **LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) **** Focus and dive into what must be done. You have the ability to clear out a problem. Understanding evolves to a new level. Your ability to come through for others is marked. Tonight: Go with an unusual energy surge or invitation — either will work. **SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ***** Add a touch of creativity. Understand what is motivating others. Add that gift of mental resilience and ingenuity to the mix, be it in a meeting or in a one-on-one discussion. Tonight: Let your hair down. **SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) **** You allow much more flex and flow than in the past. Be willing to let go of ideas that are not working, even if you are fond of them. Understanding evolves to a new level. Tonight: Happy at home. **CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ***** Emphasize speaking, listening and understanding. You might be sweeping information, thoughts and feelings under the rug. Use care with someone who has had a history of unpredictability. Tonight: Deep into your thoughts. **AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ***** You might be far more content than you realize. Understanding grows over finances. You simply might not understand all the facts yet. Reach out for experts. Tonight: Make the evening special! **PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) **** You might want to take a deep breath and rethink a personal matter. You could come up with many ideas. Others seem to gravitate to you. Your optimism helps many people relax. Tonight: Be a touch quirky.

BORN TODAY Singer Joan Jett (1958), singer, songwriter Nick Cave (1957), singer Debby Boone (1956) ...

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