

Spayed And Neutered

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, November 11 2006 7:00 PM -

It's Michigan Week. I don't know about you, but I've got that tingly feeling already. We're gonna be all over this game this week like Larry Hughes on strippers. Multiple columns each day, leading up to The Game Of The Century this Saturday at 3:30 PM. Here's the wrap of the vicious beating of the Wildcats from Furls, who I will be in the stands with this weekend.



Like the Buckeyes, who finally came clean yesterday, I had a hard time staying focused on Ohio State's opponent this week. I had my "previous channel" button the remote control program and spent most of the afternoon flipping back and forth between the Buckeyes and a special early showing of "A Miracle on 34th Street." It was spectacular!

In all seriousness, I probably watched most of the Michigan game and the Buckeyes game, often relying on picture in picture to facilitate my twisted college football obsession. I really couldn't tell if the Buckeyes spayed or neutered the Wildcats, but I can say that I am sure that they at least delivered a very strong kick to the groin as they stepped over them in route to next week's clash in Columbus.

The master of hyperbole, Brent Musberger, has already billed the Ohio State/Michigan game as the "Game of the Century" and while it is a bit early to say that, the century is only 6 years old, it is pretty clearly a big game.

Northwestern tried hard, we should give them that. They were able to move the ball pretty well in the first half (when they weren't turning it over), but they were unable to do anything at all to stop the Buckeyes. As a matter of fact, Northwestern head coach, Pat Fitzgerald, put his corner in press coverage, one on one, against Ted Ginn. That ended just the way you would have predicted.

Tyrell Sutton looked pretty good, 12 carries for 47 yards, but the Northwestern was down so badly early that I am not sure that the Buckeyes defense could really bring themselves to play or respect the Wildcat's running game.

The Buckeyes defense was not particularly impressive except that they continued to be extremely opportunistic, forcing five turnovers and special teams havoc (including a blocked

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punt). The game got ugly early and unlike a girl at a bar, no amount of beer was going to make it look any better. Trust me, I tried.

Grading the Positions:

Quarterback: A. Troy Smith was efficient and made good decisions. His interception was a bit overthrown, but largely it was on target. Of his amazing four ints this season, three have been on deflections where the receiver actually could have made the play.

Running Back: B. Would have been an A, but Pitt tried to do a bit too much to get into the endzone resulting in the dreaded, "should have just gone down" fumble. Chris Wells held on to the ball for all 11 of his carries and wracked up 99 yards, proving that he is probably going to be the best back in Columbus next year. I have been a staunch supporter of Pitt all year, and I think he is the best back THIS YEAR. I recommend he look hard at the NFL because Beanie will be eating into his carries next year, significantly.

Wide Receivers: A. Brian Hartline is amazing. He is every bit as tough and his hands are every bit as good as Gonzo's. No matter who leaves for the NFL next season, the future looks bright for the OSU receiving corps.

Offensive Line: I. You can't really grade them against Northwestern's pathetic defensive front. Troy had enough time and the Buckeyes wracked up 230 yards on the ground.

Defensive Line: A. Ohio State held Northwestern to 68 yards on the ground. If I had one petty criticism, it would be that they did not record more sacks, but Northwestern was content to take underneath routes which nullifies defensive pressure to some extent.

Linebackers: B. I was watching them very closely against Northwestern because Tyrell Sutton reminds me of Mike Hart and I think this was a great chance for the linebackers to figure out their pursuit angles and such. I thought their play was far from inspired, but it was at least consistently good. They will have to be much better getting off blocks or avoiding them altogether next week.

Secondary: B+. The play was solid, but the Wildcats were able to exploit the underneath stuff. I am unsure whether the underneath routes were open by design or whether it was poor technical play. I tend to believe it was due to the scheme. The Bucks coordinators know that Northwestern is probably not going to be able to kick their defense in the teeth consistently with long drives, so they probably played soft zone to take away any hope for big plays.

Coaching: A. After last week's debacle this week was much more sound. The Buckeyes put their collective boot on the Wildcat's throat and ensured that there would be no discussion of a let down.

Grading the Grader:

I said, "Don't be surprised if... I fall asleep before halftime." I was awake for the entire game.

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F.

I said, "Don't be surprised if... I spend more time scouting Michigan in their game vs. Indiana than I do watching this game." Actually I watched them both at the same time using picture in picture. I had the sound on the Buckeyes game, but I spent more time watching the Wolverines. B+.

I said, "Don't be surprised if... Troy Smith puts up his biggest numbers of the season." Hmmm, I'll have to make a point to try to make more objectively verifiable predictions in the future. It is hard to say if these are his best numbers of the season. 4 TD passes and completing about 2/3's of his passes. I will say it was a nice day, but not his best. C.

I said, "Don't be surprised if... Chris Wells gets his first 100 yard game. I think the coaching staff knows that he needs the confidence right now and Ohio State will need him in short yardage next week." Ill round up and spot myself the 1 extra yard I needed to be right on, 11 carries for 99 yards. Beanie Wells is proving that he is probably going to be the best back OSU has next season. If I were Pitt, I would look to the NFL for next year.

I did tell you to take the Buckeyes and the Over, and I was right on both counts. I said, "Take the Buckeyes -22. Hell, take them -40," and they actually would have covered if you did take them -40. A+.

Props to the "Prognosticator of the Week."

Surprise, it is me again.

After taking last week off, I decided that I did not like giving other people props. Here is my exact quote, "45-7 Northwestern takes a Minnesota style ass pounding. They cannot stop the run (not even a little bit) and Chris Wells needs work." In retrospect, it was a pretty severe "ass pounding."

If you like, you can try to dethrone me in the only game that counts. [Post your winning score for the Michigan game here](#), and you will be the prognosticator of the week.