

- *Saturday, September 28, 2013*

- *Ohio Stadium: Columbus, Ohio*

- *Wisconsin at Ohio State*

- *8:00 p.m. ET*

- *TV: ABC -*



The 23rd-ranked Wisconsin Badgers come to town Saturday night to face the unbeaten and 4th-ranked Buckeyes in the Big Ten opener for Ohio State, a game that could go a long way toward deciding the championship of the Leaders Division of the conference, even before the leaves fall. The Buckeyes have won 16 straight under Urban Meyer including this year's 4-0 mark, and will contend with the nation's #1 rusher, and the 3rd-ranked rushing attack in the country in the 3-1 Badgers.

Braxton Miller appears to have the go-ahead to start at quarterback for OSU, sending two-time

Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week Kenny Guiton to the bench. Miller is close to 100%, according to Meyer, as he shakes off the effects of a knee sprain suffered three weeks ago in the San Diego State game. Guiton will also play in the game, as Meyer insists he will “do right” by his super-sub after three games worth of heroics by the senior backup.

This series has been characterized by close games in recent years...the last-minute victory two years ago in Columbus on [Miller's game-winning TD pass](#) to Devin Smith...and [last year's overtime thriller](#)

in Madison, also won by the Buckeyes. In 2010, the Badgers

[knocked off top-ranked Ohio State 31-18](#)

in Madison, the lone blemish on Jim Tressel's final season, and the only win by Wisconsin in the last six meetings between the schools.

Coaching Connections



Yes, that means Bret Bielema was 1-5 against Ohio State. And Ohio State fans love to hate Bret Bielema, who by the way, [doesn't exchange Christmas cards](#) with Urban Meyer either. But dwelling on that is so 2012.

Badgers' first-year head coach Gary Anderson (*pictured*) is a friend of, and a protege of Meyer, having worked as an assistant to him at Utah, and the two are close friends, all of which has been well [chronicled](#) this week. The

lesser known coaching connection in this game is also the far more unlikely one.

OSU offensive coordinator Tom Herman will face off with Wisconsin defensive coordinator Dave Aranda for the first time since they were graduate assistants at Texas and Texas Tech, respectively. But the two go [all the way back to Division III Cal Lutheran](#) together, where Herman helped recruit Aranda.

If you think all that coziness might take some of the edge off of this rivalry...think again. Meyer was quoted this week that the Badgers were “the kings of the Big Ten”, on the basis of three straight conference titles. But [Ari Wasserman reports](#) that Bradley Roby, (and other Buckeyes, I’m sure) remember who the best team in the Big Ten was a year ago. Think Meyer’s remark was not so much the usual flattery of the opponent for the assembled media, and more a motivational barb for his own players? If so, it appears to be working.

State of the Bucks



The only thing resembling a significant health issue for Ohio State is the ongoing comeback attempt of Braxton Miller. The story of the game will revolve around what Miller does or doesn’t do on the field. Last year, the Badgers bottled him up. This year he has a whole lot more help, and another year of experience and coaching. He just needs to stay in the game.

Unfortunately, Miller has probably lost any chance at the Heisman owing to this injury, but every season brings its surprises. The good news is that [the world now knows](#) who Kenny Guiton is, and Buckeye players know that their offense can work without Braxton if and when the need arises.

Mike Vrabel's defensive line unit gets two important players back from injuries, as junior tackle Michael Bennett returns after missing the FAMU game, and sophomore defensive end Adolphus Washington is ready to go after missing two games with a groin injury. Both are starters who will be counted on to slow down the Badger running game, so their returns are well-timed.

Wisconsin: Key Personnel



Ohio State players and coaches alike have emphasized the point that Wisconsin under Gary Anderson looks a lot like Wisconsin under Bret Bielema...and under Barry Alvarez before that. They are going to run the ball, and then run the ball some more. Montee Ball is gone, with his career touchdown record, but the Badgers rush on.

This year, they feature sophomore Melvin Gordon, the leading rusher in the country, with 624 yards in four games (156.0 avg), and team him up with James White, the active NCAA leader in career rushing yardage, with 3,013 yards, and in career rushing touchdowns with 35.

Joel Stave is the returning starter at quarterback, and so far the sophomore has completed 60 of his 95 passing attempts, for 761 yards, 6 TD's and 3 interceptions. He may be playing without his reliable tight end Jacob Pedersen (8 receptions, 101 yds, 1 TD) who was injured last week, and has been limited in practices.



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