

- *Saturday, November 16, 2013*

- *Memorial Stadium - Champaign, Illinois*

- *Ohio State (9-0, 5-0) at Illinois (3-6, 0-5)*

- *12:00 p.m. ET*

- *TV: ESPN -*



Ohio State comes off the bye week with a road trip to Champaign Saturday for a noon kickoff against the [Fighting Illini](#) . The 9-0 Buckeyes will be gunning for their 22nd straight win, which would tie the school record set over the course of three seasons from 1967-69. This streak doesn't have a national championship in the middle of it like that one did, but the 3rd-ranked Buckeyes still have hope that they can make it to the last BCS title game...with four more wins, and a little help.

Memorial Stadium has not been an especially friendly venue for Ohio State in recent times, although the Bucks have not lost there since 1979. Visits to the wind-swept plain of Illinois have produced OSU victories, but they have often been decisions that were much closer than expected. Hard fought wins over the Illini in [2010 \(24-13\)](#) and [2011 \(17-7\)](#) are just the most recent examples.



OSU fans will recall a scandal-weakened Buckeye team going into Champaign in 2011, with a freshman quarterback named Braxton Miller at the helm, to face an Illini group that was a surprising 6-0 at the time. They may also remember the Bucks escaping with a 10-point victory having completed just one forward pass on the day, that a 17-yard touchdown to Jake Stoneburner. The Illini season collapsed after that game, as they lost six straight to finish the regular season at 6-6. That will get a coach fired, and Ron Zook bit the dust before the team's bowl game win over UCLA.

That OSU win two years ago is significant this week because the Illini are on a streak of their own. They have lost 19 straight Big Ten games, beginning that day against the Buckeyes. Ohio State faded late too that year, ending 2011 with four straight losses, but they landed Urban Meyer, who hasn't lost yet. The rebuild in Champaign is more...ongoing.

And no account of this series could exclude the events of six short years ago, when the Illini came to Columbus with an experienced dual-threat quarterback, and shocked the 10-0 and No. 1-ranked Buckeyes [28-21](#) . It didn't cost OSU its chance to play in the BCS title game...and the

less said about that the better...but it cost them a perfect regular season, and ended a streak of 20 straight Big Ten wins for Jim Tressel's guys. So...no parallels at all to this Saturday's game.

OSU leads the all-time series 65-30-4, and they are 35-12 in Champaign. Last year in Columbus, Meyer hung half a hundred on them in [a 52-22 rout](#) . The Buckeyes outgained the Illini 567 yards to 170. That's the kind of game most people expect this week.

Oh, and by the way, as if there's not enough on the line already, this game will also be contested for possession of [a wooden turtle](#) .

State of the Bucks

### [OSU 2013 Individual Stats](#)



At the three-quarter pole of the regular season, trends are emerging for this OSU team. The Buckeyes have been getting it done with an extremely balanced offense, and by not beating themselves with turnovers and penalties. The defense has been gradually improving against the pass, and has yet to allow a 100-yard rusher. They are also the only team in the country that has not yet allowed a rushing play of more than 20 yards.

The Buckeyes are averaging 301 yards rushing per game, but not because they are ineffective

throwing the ball. The Miller-Guiton combination at QB has thrown for 2,068 yards, with 29 touchdown passes to five interceptions, averaging 229.8 yards per game.

OSU is also +9 in turnover margin...18 takeaways to 9 turnovers, ranking first in the Big Ten. They are averaging over 5 penalties a game for 46 yards, but in the last seven games, they've been flagged about four times a game, for just 25 penalty yards per contest. That's pretty clean football.

Ohio State has had just two offensive holding calls in the last five games, and have been called for pass interference only twice all season. *(Some wise ass might joke that OSU defensive backs haven't been close enough to opposing receivers to get called for pass interference....but I wouldn't stoop that low.)* The point is, an opponent has to beat them, because they aren't going to self-destruct.

Ohio State's [national rankings](#) (123 teams): 10th in total defense, 3rd in rushing defense, 47th in passing yards allowed. On offense, they are 8th in rushing yardage, 68th in passing offense, and 6th in total offense at 530.9 yards per game.

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Key Personnel: Illinois

[Illinois 2013 Stats](#)



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