



The Buckeyes won their 22nd straight game under Urban Meyer Saturday, tying the school record for consecutive wins by smothering Illinois 60-35 in Champaign. Carlos Hyde and Braxton Miller combined to rush for 430 yards and five touchdowns, and the Buckeyes (10-0, 6-0) held off an inspired performance by Illini quarterback Nathan Scheelhaase, who threw for 288 yards, and got Illinois within 12 points in the 4th quarter.

Hyde took over in the final period when the Illini got uncomfortably close at 47-35, closing out the scoring with TD runs of 51 and 55 yards in the final four minutes. The senior would finish with a career-best 246 rushing yards, but he wasn't happy with the way the Buckeyes let the Illini back in it after piling up a 35-7 lead in the 2nd quarter. "We came out scoring points, but we hit a wall later with a few three-and-outs," Hyde said afterwards. "Late in the game we started clicking, but we can't hit that wall."



Miller took the game's third snap up the middle on a designed quarterback run, and found himself alone behind the defense for a 70-yard touchdown. He ran the ball pretty much at will the rest of the day, just missing his career high in rushing yards, with 184, and an 11.5 yds per carry average. Miller wasn't particularly sharp throwing the ball (13-29, 150 yds, 2 TD), citing a

25-mph wind as one factor in his passing troubles, but he managed TD throws to Hyde and Corey Brown as OSU went up four touchdowns early.

Illinois moved the ball in the first quarter, but Scheelhaase threw drive-killing interceptions to C.J. Barnett and Bradley Roby, the latter returned 63 yards for an OSU score. Scheelhaase never did let up, throwing the ball 50 times, and earning praise from Meyer after the game. "I'm a big fan of No. 2, the quarterback", Meyer said. "I've watched him, and I just love guys like that. I told him after the game that I think he's a great player. I thought he was hard to defend today."

Scheelhaase directed the Illini to two touchdowns, sandwiched around halftime, and Illinois was down 35-21 with some momentum in front of the home crowd. But the Ohio State offense was slowed only when they insisted on trying to throw the ball. They immediately pushed the lead back to 23 with a safety and a quick touchdown after the free kick, as Hyde pounded it in from a yard out. Hyde appeared to gain strength as the game went along. Of his 55-yard TD dash with two minutes to play, Hyde said, "That last run, in my head I was like, we could (have done) this the whole time."

Yes, they could have. OSU set a team record by averaging 10.5 yards per rush, that average helped considerably by Miller's 70-yarder and the two long scores by Hyde. But Hyde had ten runs of nine yards or more among his 24 carries.



The concern going forward was the Ohio State defense, which gave up 132 yards on the ground and 420 overall. Teams competing for the affections of poll voters and berths in BCS title games aren't supposed to give up 35 points to opponents like Illinois. It started with a long punt return for a touchdown by the Illini's V'Angelo Bentley to get Illinois on the scoreboard for the first time. It continued with the play of Scheelhaase, who was sacked six times and hit many more, but still found enough holes in the OSU secondary to complete 33 of his 50 throws,

including a couple of touchdowns.

“Our special teams are a little bit of a mess right now,” Meyer said after the game. “Some of the guys playing right now, quite frankly, haven’t played at all; and as a result, we just have to coach better”

Several streaks and other notable distinctions for the Buckeyes went by the boards courtesy of the Illini:

- A 35-yard run by Scheelhaase made the Buckeyes the last FBS team in the country to surrender a rushing play of 20 yards or more. The previous long had been 17 yards by Wisconsin’s James White.

- Carlos Hyde was stopped for a 2-yard loss, marking the first time all year he had a negative yardage play.

- Punter Cameron Johnston saw his remarkable season total of just three punt return yards exploded on the 67-yard TD return by Bentley

- Kicker Drew Basil missed an extra point, after making his first 58 in a row this season.

The bottom line for these Buckeyes though, is 10-0, despite the lack of style points on this particular afternoon. While the TV broadcasters talked incessantly about the BCS ranking implications of a mere 25-point road win for the nation’s No. 3 team, Meyer says he’s learning to keep his focus elsewhere. “These players work so hard. We have to make sure that our focus is on getting better each week instead of all of the national stuff. I think I’m learning a lesson to just shut my mouth and quit worrying about this and that. Let’s get a little better.”

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