

- *Saturday, November 30, 2013*

- *Michigan Stadium - Ann Arbor, Michigan*

- *Ohio State (11-0, 7-0) at Michigan (7-4, 3-4)*

- *12:00 p.m. ET*

- *TV: ABC -*



They call it “The Game”, because no other football contest packs more history, tradition and intense rivalry than Ohio State-Michigan. This Saturday at the Big House in Ann Arbor, the two schools will square off for the 110th time, and it will be one of the rare meetings in recent decades in which the Rose Bowl berth and/or the Big Ten championship will not be on the line.

What *will* be on the line is an undefeated regular season for the Buckeyes, and Urban Meyer has no doubt reminded his players that Michigan has spoiled perfect regular seasons for Ohio State no fewer than five times before, beginning in 1969. The Wolverines have dropped four of their last six games after a 5-0 start, but their wounded pride could be salvaged with victory over the Buckeyes, and the murmuring about Brady Hoke's status as head coach would be muted, at least for the moment.

Meyer is off to a 1-0 start as OSU head coach against their rival to the north, and like Jim Tressel before him, he came to the job with a clear understanding of the importance of The Game. There are penalties for so much as uttering the M-word around the Ohio State football program, a rule that Meyer applies to himself and his assistants as well as to his players. The Buckeyes are already assured of a spot in the Big Ten championship game next week in Indianapolis, but there will be no looking past the Wolverines...because Urban Meyer gets it.

Michigan leads the all-time series 58-45-6, but since the Wolverines went 13-0-2 the first 15 times the teams met, the series is tied 45-45-4. And over the last 50 years, it is deadlocked at 24-24-2. The Buckeyes have won ten of the last twelve games in the series, including four of the last six in Ann Arbor. Last season, OSU got back on the winning track with a 26-21 victory, after Michigan had broken a 7-game losing streak in the 2011 contest.

For a closer look at this one-of-a-kind rivalry, you could do no better than to take in [this detailed history of The Game](#) by Bucknuts.com editor Steve Helwagen. And while you're trying to fill those empty hours before Saturday noon, you might also want to check out the latest from Ramzy Nasrallah, the estimable wordsmith at 11W, on just [how hard it is to win in Ann Arbor](#)

State of the Bucks

[2013 OSU Individual Statistics](#)



Meyer's Buckeyes will be back to full strength against Michigan, with starting middle linebacker Curtis Grant returning to action after missing two games. Cornerback Doran Grant, who left the Indiana game after taking a shot to the head, is expected to play as well. The only missing starter from the beginning of the season is senior safety Christian Bryant, who broke his ankle in midseason, and has been replaced by a combination of senior Corey "Pitt" Brown, and Tyvis Powell. Freshman Vonn Bell has been getting increased reps at safety in recent weeks as well.

The 23-game win streak merits at least a passing mention here, as not only the nation's longest current streak, but as the new Ohio State team record. Every touchdown scored by the Buckeyes from here on out will set a new record for touchdowns in a season, surpassing the current total of 73. The team mark of 504 points in a season (1998) went by the wayside last weekend against Indiana, and stands at 536, waiting to be broken many more times over the next three games. This is indeed the offense OSU fans have been dreaming of for years. Savor it.

The OSU passing attack has been hampered a bit for the last two weeks by cold, wind and rain, but the Buckeyes remain one of the most powerful rushing offenses in the country, with their 1-2 punch of Carlos Hyde and Braxton Miller. Slowing the run game, though, is the strength of the Michigan defense, so if the weather permits, expect Meyer and coordinator Tom Herman to try to loosen things up by throwing the ball early.

Michigan: Key Personnel

[2013 Michigan Individual Statistics](#)



The struggling Michigan offense revolves around the multi-talented Devin Gardner, and it might be said that the biggest problem they have is that he doesn't have enough help. The offensive line has been a real problem, and that has led to an ineffective running game. That sets up long yardage plays on 2nd and 3rd downs, and there isn't enough skill position talent on hand to make the necessary plays.

Only three backs have more than 15 rushing attempts, with Fitzgerald Toussaint leading the way with 178 (3.4 yard average) and Gardner next with 156 (3.0 avg). Freshman Derrick Green (70 att.) is getting more playing time lately, but with the same level (3.1 avg) of productivity. Contrast those averages with the numbers being posted by Carlos Hyde (7.7 avg) and Braxton Miller (6.4 avg), and you see the problem for the Wolverines on the ground.



[Ohio State Football Resources](#)