

Defending The Buckeye Football Schedule

Written by {ga=furls}

Wednesday, August 08 2007 7:00 PM -

The Buckeyes 2007 football schedule has come under criticism as of late, and one of the pieces was by our very own Jesse Lamovsky. The Bucks out of conference foes this year are Youngstown State, Akron, Kent State, and a downtrodden Washington Husky team. In a counterpoint piece, Furls acknowledges the lackluster slate, but says one must look at all the evidence before passing judgement.



Recently [Jesse Lamovsky](#) from The Cleveland Fan and radio talk show host Colin Cowherd called Ohio State's football schedule into question. This year's schedule is terrible. There is no real way to defend the lemon that it is, but one must give Ohio State some credit. They are one of the few programs in the nation to challenge themselves in non conference games. While the criticism seems to be justified this year, criticisizing Ohio State's scheduling in general is a bit unfair and short sighted.

In Lamovsky's article, he stated that Ohio State needs to schedule one marquee, non conference match up per year, and I could not agree more, and neither could Ohio State's athletic directors (Geiger and Smith). That is why Ohio State scheduled Washington and Texas in the first place. What most fans and folks in the media do not realize is that while Washington looks like a lemon on the schedule this year, it was a prominent program when the home and home was actually scheduled. That is the risk you run when you schedule the big intersectional match ups, the games are a scheduled nearly a decade in advance and you don't know how well your opponent is actually going to play or what kind of momentum their program will have.

Here is Ohio State's future slate for these major marquee matchups.

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2008-9 Southern California

2010-11 Miami

2012-13 California

2014-15 Virginia Tech

2016-17 Oklahoma

This is a pretty good-looking list of teams, although there are currently rumors that the California series may be cancelled. Lamovsky specifically recommended a game against West Virginia as ideal, and I disagree. The West Virginia game, while entertaining would make this marquee game a bit to regional, and I think this is a great chance for the Buckeyes to steal the early season spotlight and make a national splash (like they have the last two years with Texas). It is like an early season BCS game.

While I do think it is a shame that Ohio State scheduled Youngstown State, national powers have no business playing around with IAA teams, I cannot fault the Buckeyes for playing a lot of MAC teams. Lamovsky specifically and all fans of college football in general, would like to see the Buckeyes play a mediocre BCS conference team and a PAC 10 team to round out their schedule, but the sad fact is that economics and the mighty dollar rule the world.

In order for the Buckeyes to play a middle of the road BCS team, say Boston College or UCLA, they would have to agree to a home and home. There is no plausible way that the Ohio State athletic department would make more money by losing a home game. As current contracts are structured, Ohio State can pay

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opposing MAC teams an appearance fee (\$500,000-750,000) instead of surrendering a home game. I am not privy to the exact details of the finances involved and expenses, but some quick third grade math tells me that ticket revenues (30,000 student tickets at 30.00 and 75,000 tickets at 60.00) are going to be in the ball park of 5.5million per game and concessions... well, I am sure they are doing OK there too at 4.00 for a bottle of water and 105,000 thirsty fans.

The easy conclusion is that these games are welfare payments to under-privileged programs, the real answer is not quite so altruistic. College football is now big business. The days of Woody, Bo, and Bear Bryant are long gone, college football, for better or worse has gone corporate. The Buckeyes, as one of the major players in this market, hold the chips and can manage their schedule for their own benefit. On the field wins are the goal, but don't lose sight of the fact that the football team is the main engine that drives a completely self-sufficient \$100,000,000.00 athletic department.

These intra state MAC battles that we all wish were relevant big games serve an important purpose. They not only pad the win column, but they also pad the budget. Ohio State offers 37 varsity sports, and 35 of them lose money. While it is nice that Ohio State has a varsity women's air rifle team, it also helps Ohio State satisfy its NCAA Title IX requirements for gender equity.

The next time you are sitting at home stewing over the fact that the Buckeyes only play one major non conference game, think to yourself, it could be worse, most major programs don't play any.