

Wrap: Buckeyes 38 YSU 6

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, September 01 2007 7:00 PM -

Could the college football season possibly have gotten off to a better start? Meat-chicken loses to a DII school, are you serious? Furls checks in this morning with the wrap of yesterday's Buckeye win in their opener, which went very well outside of DE Lawrence Wilson breaking his leg. And you just know Furls can't resist doing a little dancing on the graves of that team up north. It's good to be alive today. We own the state of Michigan.



I am not a religious man, but every Sunday, I wake up and I say my own little prayer. In this prayer, I thank the almighty for making me a Buckeye, but most of all, I thank him for delivering me from evil. I thank him for not making me a Michigan fan, never before have I ever been as glad as today. As a matter of fact, I actually feel bad for our retarded Big Ten brothers to the North.

The nation witnessed what can happen when a good scrimmage goes horribly wrong. This was an eye opening experience for major programs and national audiences alike, and I suspect that it may become much harder for the IAA elite (Ap State and YSU) to schedule these games. In the end, I learned that there is not a big difference in the level of play between those teams and the middle tier MAC teams. As a matter of fact, it would not surprise me if Ap State and YSU were able to finish third or fourth in the MAC, but in the end it is still a loss to a IAA team and Michigan will carry that stigma no matter how good the IAA team was.

Ohio State was not without its own problems in dispensing with Youngstown State. Don't get me wrong, the outcome was never in doubt, but I am not sure

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that the Buckeyes were able to do all the things that they thought they would be able to do against a IAA opponent. Namely, they were not able to blow the Penguins off the line, nor were they effectively able to plug the middle of the line on defense. In Ohio State's defense, it was pretty clear in each running play that they were going to try to jam it into the middle of the line and at times I counted TEN YSU defenders in the box (the corners were cheating in a lot to support the run).

Was the play calling that predictable on accident? I don't think so. Tressel said it himself during the halftime interview, "You don't work goal line plays that often during practice." That leads me to believe what we all witnessed Saturday was a glorified practice.

Once the Buckeyes established a comfortable passing game and score margin, they obviously shifted focus to the running game. The Buckeyes did not use their obvious speed advantage on the outside while running the ball, intentionally keeping the game inside the tackles. The game was boring, but worth watching if for no other reason than seeing the depth chart and seeing the Bucks back on the field.

Grading the Positions:

Offensive Line: C-. I don't care if YSU has seventeen men in the box, you still need to be able to open holes in the middle. If you cannot against YSU then you cannot against Wisconsin, Michigan, and Penn State, and that is a problem. The interior line (Cordle and Person) is young and inexperienced and YSU does have a very capable DT (Mychal Savage), but there is no excuse for not pushing the Penguins around. The shots delivered to Todd Boeckman were also equally inexcusable. YSU should not have been able to identify Boeckman in a lineup

following the game, instead they were able to comment on his mouth wash and cologne.

Running Backs: I. I cannot grade them the play calling and subsequent lack of holes was so bad that we really have no idea what this group is capable of. Here are my initial impressions of the running backs: Beanie looks a little hesitant, but this could've been the result of looking for holes that were not there. He did run with a lot of power, but it was generally into two or three defenders standing in his hole. Maurice Wells: He continues to remind me of a mix between Lydell Ross and Maurice Hall. Maurice Ross (as I will now refer to him) is quick and has nice moves like Hall, but goes down on first contact like Ross. Color me unimpressed. I think by mid season he may lose his spot on the depth chart to.... Brandon Saine: I have seen all the high school footage of Saine, but you can never tell how that will translate to the NCAA level. Well in Saine's case it translated just fine. He not only displayed great speed and wiggle (particularly on that 16 yard TD that was called back) he also ran with much more power than I thought. Welcome back to campus Robert Smith.

Wide Receivers: B. Establishing Todd Boeckman's confidence was obviously in the game plan, and I would have to believe that he has some now. Robiskie looked good against overmatched corners; it will be interesting to see how well he plays against better corners. Sanzenbacher looked very good, but dropped a couple of balls. Taurian Washington also looked promising. All in all, the receivers looked pretty decent, but it is hard to give them much of a grade when you consider that they were playing a IAA secondary.

Quarterback: A. Boeckman looked very sharp. His throws were crisp when they needed to be (Sanzenbacher's TD), soft when they needed to be (Sanzenbacher's drop on the outside fade), and always on time. He stepped into the pressure and made good throws instead of pulling the Charlie Frye (running around and throwing off his back foot). He showed good composure and genuinely seemed to be in synch with the receivers and in solidly in control of the

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offense.

Defensive Line: C. I was not impressed with the first week of the Doug Worthington Experiment. His pad level was too high and he was continuously moved (pretty easily) out of the hole. Rewatch the film, I guarantee that you will see that YSU's successful running plays up the middle were the result of Worthington ending up too far outside. Todd Denlinger and Dex Larimore both looked solid. YSU was able to nullify the Buckeyes' speed on the outside using quick drops and short routes. The one time Zetts showed happy feet and tried to make something happen; Lawrence Wilson ran him down from behind for a sack. Wilson was later carted off the field with a broken leg. Preliminary estimates have him out for 6 to 8 weeks, but that number is subject to change as details regarding the injury are still a bit sketchy. Fortunately, the Buckeyes are pretty deep at defensive end and have sophomore phenom Robert Rose waiting to step in.

Linebackers: B. The linebacker play was pretty solid but the tackling was a bit unenthusiastic. Laurinaitis looked very good, which is important because if the DTs are going to play uninspired ball upfront, the Buckeyes are going to need Laurinaitis to step up. YSU features two very good TEs that are the cornerstones of their passing game, and the linebackers did pretty well in coverage.

Secondary: B. They were not really asked to do much, and it is hard to figure out if the YSU wasn't throwing down the field because there was not much available or if the short routes were by design. In any case, Ohio State is going to need to get used to seeing the short underneath routes until they prove they can stop them. Last year Florida dismantled Ohio State's man under zone scheme using the short route, and I expect to see more teams follow this route until Ohio State starts mixing up its defense better, or they start effectively defending the short to intermediate routes.

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Coaching: I. I am not sure I completely understand what they were trying to accomplish, so I cannot really effectively grade them. It is pretty obvious that Tressel and Co. were not trying to run up a 73 point score (like Louisville), and they called a pretty conservative game, treating this thing like a scrimmage and putting their players at a disadvantage with predictable play calling. It kind of felt like a practice where the coaches tell the defense what play is coming and then try to see if the offense can execute the game plan anyway. The Buckeyes had mixed results, but I think we all have to agree that the passing game is much further along than we expected and the running game is not.

Grading the Grader:

I said....

1. Watch the speed on the outside. It was pretty clear that the ends were fast, but YSU game planned for it with short drops, and runs up the middle. Bully for YSU and Coach Heacock.
2. I predicted a 400 yard day from the backfield.... Umm OK sorry about that. 140 is not really very close to 400.
3. I was interested to see what Tressel would do to get a full gamesworth of work for his starters. Apparently the plan was to call such a predictable game that the Penguins would still be sort of in it and in doing so keep the margin down.
4. The return game was pretty good, but I am not a big fan of using Anderson Russell and Malcolm Jenkins, two cornerstones of the secondary in the return game. Russell tore his knee up covering a kick last year, and frankly, this secondary is not particularly deep, therefore, I am not a big fan of risking anyone in it for special teams.
5. Overall, I said 48-0. Not a bad guess. Overall I give myself a C.

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Props to Swerb, the Prognosticator of the Week.

While most of his predictions were off, his score (37-7) was right on the money.

Come to the boards next week and participate, and perhaps next week, it could be you getting the props as the prognosticator of the week. Next week, Akron, one last warm up before Washington.