

Muzzling The Media & The Huskies Dogs

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, September 15 2007 7:00 PM -

Well, it was hairy yesterday through one half when the Buckeyes trailed the Washington 7-3 at the midway point. But the Buckeyes seriously outclassed the Huskies in the second half en route to a 33-14 win. Both Beanie Wells and Brandon Saine had nice games, and Todd Boeckman had a very nice second half, which included a 68 yard bomb to Brian Robiskie which helped break the game open. In his wrap of the win, Furls breaks down the game, grades the positions, grades his predictions, and annoints me prognosticator of the week yet again.



A lot of folks in the media were speculating that Ohio State could be in serious trouble this week against the Washington Huskies. Why not? It had all the makings of a trap game; an opponent, in the Huskies, that felt like they were not getting the respect that they deserved, a fan base driven to frenzied levels, and a young quarterback, Todd Boeckman, starting in his first road game.

The excitement for this game had reached a high level in Seattle, a level typically reserved for double coupon days at Starbucks. This enthusiasm was apparent in both the attendance, nearly 2,500 over capacity, and in the vibrations of the television cameras. Husky Stadium was rocking, and you had to wonder at kick off how much this would affect an Ohio State team that had not seen this type of adversity.

The short answer, it did, but not cataclysmically. The Buckeyes were able to move the ball pretty well in the first half and played pretty good defense, but they still managed to shoot themselves in the foot too, though it really does not show

Muzzling The Media & The Huskies Dogs

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, September 15 2007 7:00 PM -

up in the box score.

The Buckeyes squandered several first half opportunities, including two missed field goals (one blocked) and a procedure penalty that negated a first and goal from the two. But in the end, the Buckeyes emerged from the locker room for the second half and made the necessary adjustments on the offensive and defensive side of the ball to put the game a way.

Most notable amongst the adjustments made for this week's game was the new freedom that Todd Boeckman earned to check out of plays at the line of scrimmage. This new authority allowed Boeckman to switch out of a running play early in the second half when he saw the safety cheating in to support the run. This audible resulted in the 68-yard touchdown pass to Brian Robiskie that was about as perfectly thrown as any I have ever seen. Robiskie, who had freshman cornerback Vonzell McDowell beat by two or three steps, did not have to break stride in tearing down the field into the endzone.

The offensive line was able to open some pretty big holes for the Buckeyes running backs, and the results pretty apparent as the Buckeyes were able to amass 263 yards on the ground on 46 carries. Beanie Wells' timing appears to be getting much better as he was hitting holes and effectively reading the second line of defense. All in all he looks like he is really starting to knock off the rust that accumulated as he sat out most of camp and spring practice.

Brandon Saine continues to impress. His speed, power, and vision are evident every time he touches the ball. I don't think that there is any question that he is now the number two back, and Maurice Wells will now be relegated to third down duties or will be used as a "change of pace" back.

Muzzling The Media & The Huskies Dogs

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, September 15 2007 7:00 PM -

The defense bent, more than most of us expected, but did not break. I was a bit disappointed that Buckeyes seemed slow to adjust to Washington's only real offensive threat, Jake Locker's legs, but I guess the Buckeyes were gambling that the Huskies had a much lower chance of sustaining drives than hitting a big play if they sold out to play the quarterback option. So while the stat sheet may show an "unimpressive" 250 yards allowed to Jake Locker in the air and on the ground, the real story is that the Huskies were held to seven points by Ohio State's first team defense.

The defensive line play upfront continued to impress, but will not get the recognition it deserves. The line did a great job maintaining gap responsibility and keeping blockers off the linebackers. As a result, Laurinaitis and company were able to step up and make some pretty good plays. If there was one area that I would have to say needed improvement, it would be tackling at the point of attack. Washington, Jake Locker in particular, amassed to many yards after contact.

Grading the Positions:

Quarterback: B-. Boeckman put up respectable numbers and threw some very nice passes. He is showing all the poise and leadership that you really want to see from your starting quarterback. It may have gone unnoticed, but going into halftime, Boeckman lost his mind of the team for their sloppy play, including the stupid penalties and missed assignments. This is nice to see from a guy making his first road start. Unfortunately, he also threw two balls that really should have been intercepted.

Runningbacks: A-. Beanie Wells is beginning to look like everything we thought he was going to be. He got off to a quick start in this game and never seemed to

Muzzling The Media & The Huskies Dogs

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, September 15 2007 7:00 PM -

wear down. Speaking of quick, how about Brandon Saine bouncing the last play of the game outside for a touchdown? It is nice to have both Eddie George and Robert Smith on the same team.

Wide Receivers: B-. Much better play this week, and none of the “dropsies.” Robiskie and Hartline are legit, just like we all thought, but the Buckeyes still do not have a viable 3rd option. Someone is going to have to step up!

Offensive Line: C+. Yep, the holes were there and they faced a much better veteran front seven than people realize, but the procedure and holding penalties on the road are inexcusable. They are drive killers and they managed to kill a couple of drives early, allowing the Huskies to hang on longer than they should have.

Defensive Line: A. The eight-man rotation continued to look strong, and Cameron Heyward may be the best guy on this team that no one is talking about. He is not finishing a ton of plays, but quarterbacks are definitely feeling his presence. The line did a great job getting push up the middle and keeping the blockers tied up at the line of scrimmage allowing the linebackers to make the plays behind them.

Linebackers: B+. They played well, there is no question there. I am surprised that Washington continued to take the ball outside on the Buckeyes. I am not sure that there are many teams out there with better lateral speed than Ohio State. Laurinaitis was huge and is

Muzzling The Media & The Huskies Dogs

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, September 15 2007 7:00 PM -

clearly bucking for early Butkus consideration, but all in all I was a little disappointed with some missed tackles on Jake Locker. Locker ended the game with 102 yards rushing, and I would estimate that 80 of those came after initial contact. If the linebackers do a better job on him at the line, I am not sure that Washington would have been able to sustain a single drive.

Defensive Backs: A-. No one was open with any regularity. It would be easy for the secondary to get so caught up in playing stopping Jake Locker's running that they lose sight of their assignments downfield, but we did not see any of those lapses. Chmidi Chekwa looked good, but he did get away with a pass-interference. I would have liked to see the safeties do a better job tackling at the point of attack.

Coaching: B+. It was better, and I have new-found faith in the Buckeyes offense now that Todd Boeckman is allowed to check out of running plays that are doomed by the defense's alignment, but I was a little unhappy with the Buckeyes lack of response to Washington's only offensive threat, Jake Locker's legs. I was surprised that we did not see a shadow on Locker in the second half, but in the end it did not matter, as the blitz packages were enough to force the mistakes that the Buckeyes needed.

Grading the Grader:

Muzzling The Media & The Huskies Dogs

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, September 15 2007 7:00 PM -

I said, paraphrased, don't be surprised if the game is much easier than people think, and I was right on the money. The basis for my perspective was offensive growth, and I think we saw a huge jump by the offense between weeks 2 and 3. A-

I said, paraphrased, don't be surprised if Beanie gets it together this week and he did. He was just a lot more comfortable on the field and saw the plays develop better. Beware in the Big Ten, Beanie Wells is on track. I called for 150 yards on the ground, but Beanie came up short delivering a mere 135 on 24 carries. Shame on me. B.

I said, paraphrased, that defensive line would dominate and to a large extent they did. The Buckeyes fell well short of my six-sack prediction, largely due to Locker's ability to run, but they were still able to force three pressure-induced turnovers. B.

I called for two interceptions on ill-advised throws and Locker obliged actually throwing three. All three were balls that he should not have thrown, the most obvious being the shovel pass to James Laurinaitis. Nice call Captain Obvious. I get no points for that one.

My prediction: Ohio State wins running away 24-7. That prediction actually looked pretty good until trash time (with the Buckeyes leading 27-7) when two late scores pushed the game over the 40 point

Muzzling The Media & The Huskies Dogs

Written by {ga=furls}

Saturday, September 15 2007 7:00 PM -

over/under. Altogether, I cost everyone a 20% vig on the over/under game call push. Sorry again. For the record, I am now (2-2 ATS).

Props to the Prognosticator of the week:

Swerb again. Rich takes it with a prediction of 23-13 for an overall margin of eleven. Nice job, but you still missed the over.

Next up, Northwestern, come make your predictions [here](#) and who knows, maybe I will be giving you props next week as the Prognosticator of the Week.