

DOMINATION

Written by {ga=furls}

Friday, November 16 2007 7:00 PM -

WOW! 95 yards of total offense. That's what this Buckeye defense held a senior laden Michigan team to today ... in their own house. And for the sixth time in seven years, Ohio State has defeated Michigan. Lloyd Carr has decided he's had enough, and has set a press conference for Monday morning at 10 AM. Furls is understandably giddy, and in his recap of the big win today, fawns over the dominating performances from Vernon Gholston and Chris "Beanie" Wells. What's next for the Bucks? We shall see.



The old football cliché dictates that the game is won and lost in the trenches. The thing about clichés is that they become clichés because they are very often true. The cliché about the game and the trenches, well, it was never more apparently true than it was in the 104th rendition of The Game.

Chris "Beanie" Wells will get all of the headlines with his 220 yards rushing and two touchdowns, but it was Vernon Gholston's dominance that set the tone for this entire game. Gholston will be credited with three sacks in the game, giving him thirteen for the season, but more than the sacks, Gholston disrupted every aspect of Michigan's offense.

It seemed like every time Henne dropped back to pass, he threw a

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duck under duress. Gholston had no less than seven hurries in the game, and his dominance on the outside forced single team matchups on the inside free red shirt freshman Dexter Larimore for another sack and two more hurries.

Like many, I thought that Vernon Gholston vs. Jake Long would be one of the most important match ups of the game, but Jim Tressel and Jim Heacock outsmarted us all. They moved Gholston around, using him to rush the passer from the left side of the defensive line while occasionally moving him back to the right to face Jake Long. While Gholston did record the first sack of the season against Long, Gholston was relatively quiet when lined up against the left side of the Michigan offensive line, but when he was on the right side, well, Michigan had no answer for him.

On the offensive side of the ball, the line held up well, but was unable to punish Michigan's nine man front consistently in the second half. Coach Tressel was content to essentially take a knee for the rest of the game following Wells' second touchdown of the game, a 62 yard jaunt that was eerily reminiscent of his 52 yard TD in last year's game. Tressel's offense went ultra conservative throwing the ball just twice in the second half, much to the chagrin of the Wolverines and nervous Buckeye fans alike. While it was frustrating and terrifying, Jim Tressel proved yet again that he knows how to win close football games.

Chad Henne and Mike Hart will leave Michigan as all time leaders in passing and running, but they will also go down in Michigan history as

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all time losers, as the two clinched all time worst 0-4 records with abysmal performances in yesterday's game. Henne completed just a hair under 1/3 of his passes, 11/34, for 68 yards and Hart was only able to muster 42 yards on the ground on 18 carries.

Defensively, the Buckeyes adjusted early and effectively to Michigan's zone-blocking scheme and Hart's running style. Hart had 28 yards rushing, and things were looking tenuous for the Buckeyes, but Hart would only muster 14 yards rushing on 13 carries for the rest of the game. Some will argue that Hart was too injured to make an impact, I will argue that Ohio State's defense was effective at stringing out the zone plays and often met Hart in the backfield with 2 or 3 tacklers. Healthy or not, this was not going to be Hart's day.

So just like that it is done. The 2007 Ohio State football season is over and the Buckeyes are once again Big Ten champions, not bad for a "rebuilding year." The Buckeyes have now clinched no worse than a Rose Bowl berth and with the win in the Big House, the Buckeyes have kept their National Championship hopes alive, but they will need a lot of help. Now it is time for Buckeye fans around the nation to become Bearcat, Red Raider, Cyclone, Razorback, Rebel, etc. fans. The Buckeyes will need a lot of help to get to the title game, but in this, the year of the upset, anything is possible.

Grading the Positions:

Offensive Line: B. The holes were there against seven and eight man fronts. Ben Person and Jim Cordle did a terrific job run blocking in the middle of the line. The pass protection was a bit shaky, but in the end, this game had very little to do with throwing the ball.

Quarterback: C-. Todd Boeckman was looked shaky in the pocket for a third straight week. The interceptions don't bother me as much as his Charlie Frye-like happy feet do. Nothing good comes of a quarterback with bouncy feet. I am not sure what happened to Todd Boeckman's composure, but Jim Tressel and the staff need to get him right.

Running Back: A+. Chris Wells has now officially thrown his name into the 2008 Heisman Trophy race. Enjoy him while you can folks, next year will be his last in scarlet and grey.

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Wide Receivers: ? Were there any on the field? 13 pass attempts, the sample space is just too small to make a call.

Defensive Line: A++. The defense won this game and Vernon Gholston was the big difference maker. Enjoy him in the bowl game, next year he will be playing on Sundays.

Linebackers: B. It was a bit of a redemption game for Marcus Freeman. He made some key plays early, but in the end, this game was all about the front four. Laurinaitis was refreshingly quiet. When little animal is quiet, that is a good thing, that means that the line is getting it done.

Secondary: A. Manningham and Arrington were both open, but not downfield. Ohio State was obviously,

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and intelligently, trying to keep the playmakers Mario Manningham and Adrian Arrington in front of the secondary. The defensive backs were guilty of a couple of pass interference calls, but they were very smart plays, I would rather give up 15 yards than leave either of those guys open downfield.

Coaching: B. Yet again, Coach Tressel beat Michigan. His ultra conservative offensive play calling won the game, but it also kept Michigan in the game. Michigan was just one big play away from jumping backing to the game through the entire second half and with Mario Manningham, well that is a bit too close for comfort. In the end, Coach Tressel owns Michigan, 6-1.

Grading the Grader:

I said, “Don’t be surprised if we are left wondering, once again, if the Buckeyes defense is any good. Michigan's running attack matches up very well with Ohio State's defense.” They are plenty good, what happened to them against the running QB last week? F.

I said, “Don’t be surprised if Chad Henne/Ryan Mallett toss a couple to the boys dressed in scarlet and grey. Chad Henne presses and makes bad throws. That is part of who he is. I expect to see two interceptions by the Buckeyes secondary downfield.” The Buckeyes had every chance in the world. Henne gave them his obligatory bad throws, no one was able to hold on. C.

I said, "Don't be surprised if Chris Wells makes his name as the next great Wolverine slayer. I expect to see the Buckeyes use the passing game to try to keep Michigan honest, but this game is going to be all about Beanie Wells. 200+ yards and 30 carries." 220 yards and 39 carries is pretty close to 200 and 30. A.

I said, "Don't be surprised if Ray Small is the secret weapon. Every year Jim Tressel uses a guy early on that no one was expecting. Last year, it was Roy Hall on the first drive, this year it will be Ray Small (or perhaps Sanzenbacher). Look for the Buckeyes to get a couple of early passes to Small downfield." Well Small was obviously part of the game plan, but they

never really threw downfield to him. They tried to go to him on two reverses, and he did pick up a critical first down early in the game. D.

I said, "Don't be surprised if the thunder and lightning backfield, Wells and Saine. All year long there have been rumors of two back sets featuring Wells and Saine, I look for that to become a reality today. With the end result... Saine drifting off to the flat as a receiver, or Saine streaking down the field in play action. We will see some stuff from Jim Tressel that were not expecting in this game." We saw a lot of Saine, but only to give Beanie some much needed rest. C.

I said to take Ohio State and the Over.
Ohio State was an easy cover, the over...
well it was an easy not cover. I said I liked
the Bucks by 10-14, and they won by 11.
Not too bad. B.

Up next, well that is anyone's guess.
Right now it looks like an anticlimactic
date in the Rose Bowl with a Dennis
Dixonless Oregon team, but all things
are subject to change. Thanks for
tuning in this season! GO BUCKS!
Michigan sucks!