

The Buckeyes Chances, By The Numbers

Written by {ga=furls}

Monday, November 19 2007 7:00 PM -

As some of our readers know, Furls has spent the last decade plus in the military, recently supplemented that with a degree at Ohio State, and is now training to help commandeer nuclear submarines for the U.S. Navy. Dude is strong with numbers. And even stronger when it comes to analyzing our beloved Buckeyes. In his latest, Furls breaks down the Buckeyes chances of making it to the BCS title game.



Last year, I did a numerical analysis of likely BCS matchups prior to the Ohio State-Michigan game and found that the winner of the game was most likely to play the winner of the SEC championship game. For the remainder of this year, I will be forecasting Ohio State's likelihood of making a second consecutive BCS appearance based on the outcomes and expectations for future games. There is nothing wrong with a Rose Bowl berth, but the thought of watching the Buckeyes play Arizona State or a Dennis Dixonless Oregon team leaves one a bit unfulfilled.

After this week's shake ups, here is where the Buckeyes stand:

1. LSU
2. Kansas
3. West Virginia
4. Missouri
5. Ohio State.

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In order for Ohio State to make the BCS Title game, they will need three of the four teams above them to lose, obviously not a likely scenario, but there is a lot of football left to be played.

LSU still has the Arkansas and SEC title game remaining. LSU has not been impressive but not unbeatable. The best chance for an LSU loss is if Georgia can somehow vault into the SEC title game. It would take a Tennessee loss at Kentucky. All in all, this scenario is unlikely but not impossible. I put the chances of it happening at 30%.

Kansas and Mizzou will play this week and someone will be eliminated. That leaves the other to survive for a shot at the Big 12 title game against recently deposed Oklahoma. Oklahoma has the tools to beat either of those teams as long as Sam Bradford is able to recover from the concussion he suffered against the Texas Tech Red Raiders. It is not an unlikely scenario at all. I put the odds of an OU victory, eliminating all Big 12 teams from contention at about 70%.

Finally, West Virginia. The Mountaineers have two games remaining, University of Connecticut and Pittsburgh. Both games will be played in Morgantown and regardless of Connecticut's gaudy ranking, the Huskies are not very good. The Mountaineers should roll through the remainder of their schedule. Ohio State may have had a chance to jump West Virginia with some impressive play, but since the Buckeyes will be idle, well, that just is not going to happen. Odds of a WVU loss to close the season? 15%.

Based on the above estimates, Ohio State has a 39.5% chance of making it to the title game; not exactly the miracle that some have eluded to but not exactly a likely outcome. In my calculations, Ohio State would be most likely to face West Virginia. Assuming that one of the permutations above occurred and Ohio State did make the championship game, my estimates would have Ohio State's most likely opponents as:

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- 53.2% West Virginia
- 26.6% LSU
- 11.4% Big 12 Champ (either Kansas or Mizzou)
- 8.8% Field (assuming everyone loses)

In the end, I expect the Buckeyes will end the season ranked #3 in the BCS and finish sitting as the odd man out, watching West Virginia and LSU play for the National Championship in the Sugar Bowl. It would not shock me to see the Buckeyes end up in the title game as I do not believe that it would take the "miracle" that most of the media has proclaimed. I would just say that it is "unlikely."

And if there is one thing we know about this season, the improbable is not quite as unlikely as we think.