



(Over the next few weeks, our Buckeye writers will preview some of the key matchups on the 2010 OSU football schedule. Today: Ohio State-Penn State; Nov. 13, 2010)

With a conference championship up for grabs, last year's Ohio State football team was looking down the barrel of a tough November schedule with games against Penn State, Iowa, and Michigan (with Iowa being the only game in Columbus). The 2010 schedule for Ohio State will end with the same three teams in consecutive weeks, and TheClevelandFan's preview of the Buckeyes key matchups continues with a closer look at Penn State.

We'll be getting to the actual breakdown shortly, but before that, you absolutely *must* watch this video. It's vital for you as a reader to understand the culture at Penn State. It starts off a little slow, but at the 31 second mark... well, [it's just pure magic](#)

I feel the need to do a mini break-down of this video, because nothing says "college football" like Miley Cyrus' *Party in the USA*. Again, the first 30 seconds of the video is pretty uneventful; just a dozen or so Penn State fans listening to a Miley Cyrus song. But at 31 seconds, the pre-chorus kicks in and pure, uninterrupted energy takes over. At the 44 second mark, the gentleman in the middle of the screen wearing the denim overalls does the Napoleon Dynamite *happy hands* sign language dance when Miley sings about a butterfly, which is perfectly executed. At 48 seconds, the guy that's way to close to the camera "moves his hips" to the coinciding

lyric, and you can thank whatever God you believe in that his hips were below the camera line. My final observation comes at the 52 second mark, when the guy sitting down (in the very top right corner) puts his hand to his chest and passionately sings the lyrics "

I know I'm gonna be okay

..." We'll nickname this guy

80's workout pants.

It's okay

80's workout pants,

Miley's lyrics can be overwhelming for me sometimes as well.

Now that you have a better feel for what Penn State is all about, we can dive into the preview.

We are... Ohio State's Rival?

There seems to be a disagreement between the two fan bases on whether or not Ohio State and Penn State are rivals. If you ask most Ohio State fans, they'll say that Penn State *wants* to be Ohio State's rival, but the matchup between these two teams is just another conference game. When you cross the border and ask Penn State fans, they contest that there is plenty of history between the two teams, and that the competitiveness of the series over the last decade or so warrants the label.

Regardless of your view on this debate, there is no denying that Penn State has been Ohio State's toughest competition over the past five years. Since 2005, the Buckeyes have won three games to Penn State's two. There have been some fantastic battles between these two teams, and no love lost between the fan bases:

Two years ago, in Terrelle Pryor's freshman season, Penn State came to Columbus for what turned out to be the conference game of the year. In a defensive battle that took place under the lights, the Buckeyes had a 6-3 lead late in the fourth quarter. With a third and short situation and Ohio State near midfield, Coach Tressel called for a simple quarterback sneak to get the first down. When the ball was snapped, Pryor saw an opening and tried to bounce the play outside, but a Nittany Lion defender met him in the backfield and forced a fumble, which Penn State recovered. The Nittany Lions used the short field to their advantage and punched in the go-ahead touchdown. After another Terrelle Pryor turnover, Penn State added a field goal and escaped the 'Shoe with a 13-6 victory. The loss produced plenty of bad feelings and [this picture](#) for Terrelle Pryor, one made famous by the Penn State fan base.

Last year, Pryor and the Buckeyes had the rematch in Happy Valley. Some of the Penn State students thought it would be funny to ridicule Pryor for his meltdown in Columbus the year before by creating [this t-shirt](#). The Buckeyes stole the momentum early, and with some big plays down the stretch, Pryor silenced almost everyone in Beaver Stadium (with the exception of about 10,000 Buckeye fans). It's funny how a year of development and a 17 point *beat-down* can [change someone's demeanor](#)

. The win was one of the more enjoyable victories during the Jim Tressel era, and it had all of Buckeye Nation nodding their heads like 'yeah', and moving their hips like 'yeah'.

That was then, this is now...

Penn State will not be coming into this game with a team as solid as last year's squad. By November, Joe Paterno and the coaching staff should have a pretty good handle on who can do what for the Nittany Lions, but coming into the season, there are some big question marks for this team.

Penn State has a *huge* hole to fill at the quarterback position with the departure of Daryl Clark. Coach Paterno is looking to replace the two time all Big-Ten quarterback with two youngsters, Kevin Newsome and Matt McGloin. Neither did anything to impress the coaching staff during spring practice, and the competition might not be settled between the two until the start of conference play. You have to figure that Penn State's star running back, Evan Royster, will get a ton of carries in an offense that's breaking in an inexperienced quarterback (picture Ohio State's offensive play-calling last November).

The Nittany Lions also lost some big names on the defensive side of the ball. Penn State loses all three starting linebackers from a year ago, and will really miss the presence of Navarro Bowman and Sean Lee. Up front, they'll have to replace first-round NFL selection Jared Odrick, who was an absolute monster in the trenches last year producing 7 sacks and 11 tackles for loss. He, along with the three linebackers behind him, were the biggest reasons the Nittany Lions ranked sixth in the nation defending the run.

Again, the 2010 version of the Nittany Lions won't be as star studded as they have been the last few seasons, but Joe Paterno will have this team ready to play, especially by November.

In the end...

I could see this one playing out very similarly to the 2006 Ohio State - Penn State game. In that game, the Buckeyes were the *juggernaut*, playing at home with a loaded offense. Similar comparisons can be drawn to that 2006 game as Penn State was replacing veteran quarterback Michael Robinson and some big time players on defense (namely Paul Posluszny).

I like Ohio State's chances in this one (assuming the Buckeyes are healthy). It's hard to imagine Penn State's young quarterback, whether it's Kevin Newsome or Matt McGloin, not being rattled by 105,000+ fans screaming their throats dry for three hours. The quarterback's tummy will be turning and he'll be feeling kind of homesick; it'll be too much pressure and he'll be nervous. The Buckeyes will have used the previous week off (they have a bye-week coming into this game) to recharge their batteries, get healthy, and look to have their second undefeated November in as many years.

One more thing...

How amazing would it be if the Ohio State sound guys played "Party in the USA" over the speakers as the Penn State football team took the field this November? I'll be writing a letter to the... music coordinator for Ohio State... every day from now until game-day, begging him/her to do this. If it happens, you're welcome, Buckeye Nation. You're welcome.

Key Matchup Archive - In case you missed one of our previous breakdowns:

[Miami Hurricanes](#) [Wisconsin Badgers](#)