



Ohio State overpowered the Michigan Wolverines 37-7 Saturday at Ohio Stadium, and claimed a share of the Big Ten title for the sixth straight year. The Buckeyes sent off another class of seniors unbeaten against the Wolverines as Jim Tressel improved his record to 9-1 against Michigan with his seventh consecutive win in the series.

The OSU defense came up big when it counted, holding the Wolverines without a point on their two long first quarter drives, while the Buckeyes were struggling to get going on offense. Michigan turned the ball over on downs, and again on a Denard Robinson fumble, allowing the Buckeyes to build a 10-0 lead early in the second quarter.

When Michigan scored a touchdown to draw within three at 10-7, the Buckeyes answered immediately on Jordan Hall's 85-yard kickoff return TD, and the defense would let it get no closer from that point on. OSU cornerback Travis Howard had an interception and a fumble recovery as the Buckeyes won the turnover battle 3-1.

Terrelle Pryor threw touchdown passes to Dane Sanzenbacher and DeVier Posy, and Dan Herron rushed for 175 yards and a touchdown, as the Buckeyes scored all their points in the middle two quarters and coasted home on the strength of a defense that allowed just one sustained Michigan drive in the second half.

Robinson, the mercurial Wolverine quarterback, rushed for 105 yards on 18 carries and

completed 8 of 18 passes for 87 yards, but he suffered dislocated fingers on his non-throwing hand on a hit by Adam Bellamy, and after trying to play through it, went to the sidelines for good in the 3rd quarter.

A Date in the Sugar vs. the SEC?

With the convincing victory, Ohio State (11-1, 7-1) is virtually assured an invitation to one of the BCS bowl games. They entered the game ranked No. 8, and two of the teams ranked above them (Boise St., LSU) lost this weekend. Asked after the game about making the BCS cut, Tressel replied, "Yeah, I think we're a top ten team...There's 10 BCS teams, right?"

Right, Coach. And while the cherished Rose Bowl bid belongs to Wisconsin, the Buckeyes are probably headed to the Sugar Bowl where the opponent could be Arkansas, or possibly South Carolina, should Auburn lose to the Gamecocks next week in the SEC Championship Game.

Rick Ticked



It was less jovial in the visitors' locker room, where embattled Michigan coach Rich Rodriguez was testy answering questions concerning his future in Ann Arbor.

"I'm ticked," said Rodriguez, "What, do you want me to go jump out there and hold hands with all the Buckeye fans and sing Kumbaya? I wish we would have played better"

Someone should tell Rodriguez that it's "Carmen, Ohio", the OSU alma mater, that the Buckeyes sing with their coach after each game, but whatever....he may not have to learn any more about it. The game wasn't even over before the speculation began swirling about whether Jim Harbaugh could be lured from Stanford to take over the helm in Ann Arbor.

Michigan Athletic Director Dave Brandon is on record as saying he will wait to do his evaluation of the program after Michigan's bowl game, but for the sake of recruiting, if the decision is going to be thumbs down, the university may decide to make their move sooner instead of later.

A Slow Start, Then a 2nd Quarter Explosion



While Robinson and the Wolverines were putting together 10 and 12-play drives in the first quarter, the Buckeyes were going three-and-out on their first two possessions. A 39-yard completion to Sanzenbacher got them going on their third try though, and a 21-yarder to Jake Stoneburner put the Buckeyes in position to open the scoring with a 33-yard Devin Barclay field goal three plays into the 2nd quarter.

An 18-yard punt by Michigan set the Buckeyes up at the Wolverine 35-yard line, and they would convert five plays later on a slant to Sanzenbacher from seven yards out for the score. With the score 10-0, the Wolverines would mount their only touchdown drive of the afternoon, as

Robinson rushed for 42 yards and threw for 21 more in the 10-play 80-yard march. They were halfway through the 2nd quarter, and within three points, but whatever confidence they gained from that drive would be short-lived.

OSU sophomore tailback Jordan Hall took the ensuing kickoff at the 15-yard line and broke past a great block by fellow-kick returner Jaamal Berry and sprinted down the left sideline. He cut back inside to avoid the kicker and breezed in for the score to make it 17-7. If there was one turning point in the game, that was it.

Michigan drove to the OSU 37, but turned it over on downs once again, and the Bucks would be able to add another touchdown before the half on the strength of two big third-down completions by Pryor. Sanzenbacher made a great leaping grab of a Pryor pass for a 25-yard gain on a 3rd-and-11 play, and on the next series, Pryor rolled right on 3rd-and-5 from the Michigan 33, and found Posey on a short crossing route that the junior wideout was able to turn into six points with a headfirst dive into the end zone.

One more chance to add to the 24-7 lead before halftime went south when Pryor threw his only interception of the day trying to force the ball in to Posey at the goal line on a 3rd and 18 play. Tressel took the blame for that call later, saying "I got too greedy".

Defense Takes Over



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