



Ohio State gave up two quick first quarter touchdowns to Miami Saturday night, and that's all the Hurricanes needed to beat the Buckeyes, who failed to reach the end zone all night in an embarrassing display of passing futility. OSU quarterbacks failed to complete a single pass to a wide receiver or tight end, gaining a total of 35 yards through the air, eventually falling to the unranked Hurricanes 24-6. And they said Terrelle Pryor couldn't throw.

Lamar Miller bolted for 54 yards to the OSU 9-yard line on Miami's first offensive play, and three plays later the Hurricanes had a lead they would not relinquish. The Ohio State defense righted the ship after the game's first ten minutes, and held Miami to three points over the next three quarters of play, but even Hurricane QB Jacory Harris' penchant for the turnover (2 interceptions and a fumble) couldn't generate more than 3 points for the Buckeyes.

Ohio State ran the ball effectively, with Jordan Hall adding a real spark to the OSU attack with 87 yards on 14 carries to go with Carlos Hyde's contribution of 56 more on his 12 tries. The OSU rushing total of 190 yards was a bit surprising, considering the complete lack of the threat of the forward pass. Miami stacked the box with eight or nine defenders most of the night, completely unafraid of the downfield passing threat, and the Buckeyes were still able to average a respectable 4.7 yards per rush.

JoeBad

It's never one player's fault when a team loses, and young OSU receivers Evan Spencer, Chris Fields and Verlon Reed each dropped one catchable ball, but it's hard to avoid the bottom line conclusion from this game. Starting quarterback Joe Bauserman was awful, and there's no way to sugarcoat the fact. Bauserman was 2 of 14 passing for 13 yards and one

sack...and even those miserable numbers don't communicate his haplessness as a passer.

To the extent that the passing game could be said to have had a "design", it left OSU observers longing for the wide-open features of Tresselball. For purposes of comparison (if not nostalgia), in the Buckeyes 36-24 win over the Hurricanes a year ago, Terrelle Pryor passed for 233 yards and rushed for 113 more. Pryor's absence was certainly conspicuous on this day, even if it would be inaccurate to say he was "missed".

2008 Redux?

Before this game, some OSU writers were drawing comparisons to the 2008 season, when senior starter Todd Boeckman looked anything but special through two lackluster wins over weak opponents, and then after a thorough beatdown against USC in the third game, gave way to the promising freshman Pryor, who started for the rest of the season, and beyond.

No doubt those comparisons look even more apt in light of Bauserman's showing for the last two weeks. He may have forced the hand of Luke Fickell and offensive coordinator Jim Bollman to go with Braxton Miller, who made his share of mistakes against Miami with a fumble and an interception, but he represents the future for a team whose present is looking increasingly mediocre.

Miller's first pass attempt was tipped and intercepted, and he only attempted three more passes in his evening's work, going 2 of 4 for 22 yards with a couple of completions to running backs. He flashed some of his running skills as the Buckeyes tried to mount a late comeback, picking up 39 yards on several designed quarterback runs in the fourth quarter, but that drive ended when Miller got hit from behind and fumbled after a six-yard pickup, giving the ball back to Miami.

Quick Start

One of the easiest pre-game keys to identify for Ohio State was the importance of not falling behind early, but two possessions into this game for Miami, it was 14-0 'Canes. Buckeye backers who predicted a "Miller Time" theme for this contest didn't foresee that the Miller would be named Lamar, and that he would suit up for the Hurricanes. The Miami tailback had a 100-yard game before the first quarter was over, and he finished with 184 yards on 26 carries, for a 7.1 yard average.

First-year Miami coach Al Golden kept his quarterback Jacory Harris under control, and Harris responded with enough positive plays to balance out his three turnovers. He threw two TD passes in the early going, going 16 of 23 for the game for 123 yards. Playing with the lead and with an effective rushing attack, he was able to limit the damage he's been known to do to his own team when he throws the football a lot.

The Sound of the Other Shoe Dropping

After Ohio State barely squeaked by a decent Toledo team last week with 8 of their 22

projected starters sitting out for various reasons, it was obvious that the weight of all the suspensions and the turmoil that caused them would eventually show up in the loss column for this team. A couple of those starters returned for Miami, and Jordan Hall certainly made his presence felt in a positive way, but in some ways this loss felt like the culmination of all the tribulations the team has gone through.

I thought Luke Fickell's lack of game day head coaching experience showed as well. Fickell has had the deck stacked against him from the start though...getting hired too late to search for a qualified offensive coordinator, and then being forced into a choice between a freshman quarterback and Joe Bauserman. Talk about your no-win situation.

The ineptitude on offense would be easier to understand if OSU had been up against a really good team, but that is not what this Miami Hurricane bunch appeared to be. OSU dropped out of the Top 25 as a result of this loss, and it's difficult at this point to envision them climbing back into it in 2011.

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