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Carrying On

Haskins, Dobbins Lift Bucks Despite 'Alarming' Issues As U-M Looms

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

On one side, Ohio State played some of its best football of the season against Maryland. On the other side, the Buckeyes played some of their worst Nov. 17 in College Park, Md.

It turned out that such a combination was still good enough for a win – just barely – in overtime. Ohio State racked up 688 yards of total offense – the most ever against a Big Ten opponent – and allowed 535 yards in a 52-51 shootout win that was cemented when the Terrapins failed on a two-point conversion attempt in the extra period.

The Buckeyes had some "alarming" issues on defense, as head coach Urban Meyer put it, but the leaks were made up for largely by tough running from a likely source and even tougher running from an unlikely one.

Sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins, playing an even bigger role than normal with junior Mike Weber sidelined, set personal bests with 37 carries for 203 yards (5.5-yard average) while scoring one touchdown. Dobbins' running was key, but it was really sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins who carried the No. 10 Buckeyes to victory.

Haskins showed a not-yet-seen willingness to stick his nose in and get the tough yardage, setting career highs for carries (15), rushing yards (59) and



SONNY BROCKWAY

ON THE RUN – Ohio State sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins (7) set career highs in carries (15), rushing yards (59) and rushing touchdowns (three) against Maryland.

rushing touchdowns (3). Oh, and he threw for 405 yards and three more scores – but that's just another day at the office.

Haskins grew up in nearby Potomac, Md., and admitted that the homecoming – including some trash talk from opposing players – played into his attitude going in. He once had been committed to the Terrapins before choosing Ohio State.

"Probably just that competition, being back home, having those guys talk smack to me," Haskins said of his motivation. "I can run. I guess today was the first day I wanted to show I could."

After Ohio State (10-1, 7-1 Big Ten) fell behind, 17-3, in the first quarter, Haskins got Ohio State back in the game with a 68-yard touchdown pass to Terry McLaurin in the second. The Terrapins (5-6, 3-5) were ahead, 24-17, at the break and 31-24 after the third quarter. In the fourth, Haskins had a 1-yard touchdown run to tie it at 38 then hit junior receiver Binjamin

Victor to tie it at 45. In the extra period he forced his way into the end zone for a 5-yard run and what ended up being the winning score.

Haskins said he knew going in that he'd run the ball more against the Terrapins, but a three-touchdown day wasn't necessarily in his expectations. But now that he's proved what he can do in the biggest moment, Haskins' legs might join his right arm as a big part of what Ohio State does on offense.

"Running is fun, actually, so I think I might do it a little bit more," he quipped during the postgame press conference.

It wasn't just a magic switch that was flipped, though. Haskins' ability to run the ball emerged as the next step in his progression as a quarterback – adding another tool to an already well-equipped toolbox.

It also showed that he's willing to play tough and get

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Continued On Page 8

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