

BSB Predicts Comfortable Win For Buckeyes In Minneapolis



Ahead of Ohio State's Thursday night matchup with Minnesota, the BSB staff was tasked with putting its takes on the game down on paper for the whole world to see. The consensus? Ohio State rolls, even though it has some trouble with the explosive Minnesota offense.

Chase Brown: Ohio State Relies On Offensive Weapons To Defeat Gophers

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day may only have one offensive problem for him and his coaching staff to solve this season: With so much talent, how will everyone on the touch the ball?

The Buckeyes return Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson — arguably the best wide receiver duo in college football — running backs Master Teague and Miyan Williams and tight end Jeremy Ruckert. The offense also adds quarterback C.J. Stroud, running back TreVeyon Henderson and more opportunity for Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Julian Flemming.

Stroud should feel comfortable in his first start behind an Ohio State offensive line that includes Nicholas Petit-Frere (6-5, 315), Thayer Munford (6-6, 320), Harry Miller (6-4, 315), Paris Johnson Jr. (6-6, 315) and Dawand Jones (6-8, 360). He will have plenty of time to distribute the ball to open receivers down the field and will extend plays with his legs if he sees green grass in front of him.

Ohio State's inexperienced linebackers and secondary are a cause for concern. Still, they will make enough plays when necessary to contain a Minnesota offense that will rely heavily on All-Big Ten running back Mo Ibrahim and quarterback Tanner Morgan's connection with wide receiver Chris Autman-Bell.

Ohio State 45 - Minnesota 24

Wyatt Crosher: Ohio State Survives Early Scare To Defeat Gophers

This is the type of matchup that is just scary enough for Ohio State that I think an upset is slightly, slightly possible. Minnesota may not be the most talented team in the country, but the Gophers bring back a substantial amount of experience in key positions, specifically on offense.

Ohio State's pass defense could be improved in 2021, no doubt about it, but there will still be some

bumps and bruises on the way to getting that improvement, and I think Minnesota is one of those bumps. I think the game could very well be tied or led by the Gophers at halftime, but Ryan Day has proven the ability to make adjustments when needed for the second half, and I think that's what happens here.

The Buckeyes will prove to be the better team and too much to handle for Minnesota, but it being on the road, in front of fans for the first time in two years and with a new quarterback, it won't be as easy as it likely should be.

Ohio State 42, Minnesota 31

Patrick Mayhorn: Stroud Leads Buckeyes To Victory, Despite Defensive Struggles

Minnesota's offense is too good and too experienced for a much-improved version of this Ohio State defense to hold it down for four quarters. Personally, I don't expect that we will see a much-improved version of the Ohio State defense, at least not this early on in the season. That doesn't bode well for the silver bullets, especially with Mo Ibrahim and Chris Autman-Bell on the other sideline.

But, Ohio State does still have Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson, Miyan Williams, TreVeyon Henderson, one of the best offensive lines in the nation and C.J. Stroud, who has looked as good as he possibly could through fall camp. That's too much for a Minnesota defense that could be even shakier than its counterpart.

Minnesota's offense gets the edge early on, taking advantage of inexperienced linebackers and a weak secondary to take a lead into the half, but Ohio State's offense jumps into gear in the second frame, while the defense manages to force a couple of turnovers to blunt the Gopher production on the way to a two-score win that was quite a bit more comfortable in the second half than the final score indicates.

Ohio State 45, Minnesota 31

Mark Rea: Secondary Still A Question For Buckeyes

The offseason hand-wringing regarding Ohio State's starting quarterback position has been replaced by jitters about C.J. Stroud, an untested freshman whose next career pass will be his first. But Stroud has the confidence of his receiving corps and his offensive line, not to mention head coach Ryan Day, so that's plenty good enough for me.

If you want something to worry about, concentrate on OSU's defensive back seven - in whatever alignment Kerry Coombs and his defensive assistants configure. Minnesota has some weapons, including Mo Ibrahim, the reigning conference running back of the year. But what scares me the most is QB Tanner Morgan returning his old 2019 self when he threw for 3,253 yards and 30 TDs while leading Goldy to an 11-2 record.

Ohio State is going to win this game, but how the back seven performs against Morgan is what will determine the final score - and whether or not we all can take a collective breath before Oregon comes to town next week.

Ohio State 42, Minnesota 21