

My Thoughts: These Buckeyes Should Be Remembered For The Journey, Not The End Result



As the last few seconds in Monday night's national championship ticked away, I began to wonder about legacy and what it means to leave one.

No, not the legacy of Crimson Tide head coach Nick Saban, who captured his record seventh national title, but that of this particular Ohio State team.

These Buckeyes have been through all kinds of trials and tribulations over the last year, and it would be an absolute shame if the 52-24 loss in Miami is all they're remembered for. The expectations in Columbus are so unbelievably high that it will probably happen, of course, but I know I'll remember this team for so much more than that.

After all, this Ohio State team - which was motivated all offseason by a controversial loss to Clemson in the 2019 Fiesta Bowl - had its season taken away from it by the Big Ten on Aug. 11. But the players, coaches and parents didn't just give up there.

They fought valiantly to have the season reinstated, knowing well the sacrifices they or their players or their sons would have to make to get through a season in the middle of a pandemic. Then they made the most of that second chance.

The Buckeyes overcame canceled games, including one that was the result of a coronavirus outbreak within the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, and the loss of several key players for games at a time to win their fourth straight conference title. They also avenged that loss to the Tigers with their most complete game of the season.

That, in itself, is a tale that some of the best storywriters in the world might find too far-fetched. It's just too bad the season didn't end right there.

Unfortunately, Ohio State still had to play one more game this season against a team seemingly destined to win the national title.

Alabama had the Heisman Trophy winner and several other national award recipients on the offensive side of the ball, including the best quarterback, running back, wide receiver, interior lineman, center, offensive line and offensive coordinator. The Buckeyes might not have been able to keep up with the Crimson Tide, even on their best night.

So, I ask you, why should the result of that one game against a heavy favorite dictate how we feel about this particular Ohio State team, especially given that the Buckeyes overcame so much just to get to that point? It shouldn't.

In fact, this is a team worth celebrating for years to come, even if it didn't get to hoist the College Football Playoff trophy or hang a banner on the facade of Ohio Stadium.

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