

Ohio State-Alabama Stat Preview: Comparing The Defenses



Ohio State and Alabama have gone through this season as offensive powerhouses, with both ranking in the top five in scoring offense and total offense in the Football Bowl Subdivision.

But for both the Buckeyes and the Crimson Tide, the same cannot be said for their defensive efforts, which have been far more mediocre than what Justin Fields, Mac Jones, Devonta Smith and Chris Olave have done on the other side of the ball all season.

Still, there are certainly strengths within these defenses, but they aren't as dominant as what we have seen from both teams offensively all year.

| | Points Against | Rush Yards | Opponent YPC | Pass Yards | Opp. Pass Rating | Turnovers Forced |
|--|----------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| Ohio State | 22 | 89.16 | 3.2 | 281.14 | 133.06 | 2.57 |
| Alabama | 19 | 110.25 | 3.21 | 242.92 | 120.01 | 1.83 |
| <i>All numbers are on a per game basis</i> | | | | | | |

Still, Alabama ranks No. 13 in the FBS with 19.0 points per game allowed this season, and Ohio State still has a respectable ranking in 31st with 22.0 points per game allowed. The defenses have done enough to get these teams to undefeated records, and both are more strong stopping the run than the pass.

Ohio State's rush defense is one of the very best in the country, ranking second to just Georgia in yards allowed on the ground, while holding opponents to the 10th-fewest yards per carry in the FBS. Alabama ranks No. 11 in that category, and has had success forcing teams to rely on yards through the air.

But the pass defenses are both less than stellar, with the two teams ranking No. 79 and No. 116 for fewest passing yards allowed. Even with all those yards, Alabama still has allowed just a 120.01 passer efficiency rating, good for No. 19 in the FBS, while Ohio State's opposing passer rating ranks No. 57.

Where Ohio State's defense really shines is in its ability to force turnovers, forcing almost a full turnover more per game than the Crimson Tide, something that could be a huge momentum swing in a game as close as this one appears to be.

The defenses have not been world beaters this year, not by a long shot, but there is talent on this side of the ball that can help to slow down these high-powered offenses. Still, there's a reason so many are expecting a shootout, and it is not strictly because of the offensive talent both teams possess.

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