

Ohio State Boasts Most Trips To Fiesta Bowl: The History



Ohio State makes its ninth trip to the Fiesta Bowl, making it the most trips to the game for any team. The Buckeyes are 5-3 with a mix of season-salvaging finishes and end-of-season disappointments.

The most notable Fiesta Bowl appearance for Ohio State came in the 2003 Fiesta Bowl, when the Buckeyes shocked the world and No. 1 Miami (Fla.) to become BCS national champions.

On Dec. 28, the Buckeyes seek to win the bowl in Glendale, Ariz., for the sixth time in program history and avenge their 2016 loss to Clemson. What follows are details from each of the Buckeyes' eight previous Fiesta Bowl experiences.

1980 Fiesta Bowl (1980 season): Penn State 31, Ohio State 19

Thirty-nine years ago, the Buckeyes ventured to Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe, Ariz., for their first Fiesta Bowl, where they fell 31-19 to Joe Paterno's Penn State.

The matchup between the Buckeyes and the Nittany Lions marked the only time the teams have met in a bowl game. With both teams being in the Big Ten East Division, they have met each other each season since 1993. In just Earle Bruce's second season at the helm, No. 11 Ohio State had a chance to upset No. 10 Penn State but collapsed in the second half.

After a three-and-out from Ohio State, Penn State's Curt Warner gashed the Buckeyes for a 64-yard touchdown on PSU's first play from scrimmage, and the Lions went up 7-0.

Ohio State quarterback Art Schlichter answered with a touchdown pass to Doug Donley, but Ohio State missed the extra point and trailed 7-6. Schlichter hit Gary Williams for another score and a missed conversion attempt gave the Buckeyes a 12-7 advantage.

Schlichter kept firing and found Donley for another touchdown. The Buckeyes finally nailed the extra point and led 19-7. The Nittany Lions knocked a field goal through to cut OSU's lead to 19-10 just before halftime.

Through the first half, Schlichter had completed 15 of 22 passes for 244 yards and three scores, and outside of the Lions' first play, the Scarlet and Gray had dominated PSU.

Second-half rushing touchdowns from Todd Blackledge, Jon Williams and Booker Moore helped Penn State outscore Ohio State 21-0 in the final 30 minutes and seize the victory. Schlichter struggled after the intermission, completing just 5 of 13 passes for 58 yards.

Overall, Ohio State threw for 302 yards compared to 117 for Penn State, but the Nittany Lions out-gained the Buckeyes 351-110 in the ground game and proved to be superior in Tempe.

1984 Fiesta Bowl (1983 season): Ohio State 28, Pittsburgh 23

The 1984 Fiesta Bowl between No. 14 Ohio State and No. 15 Pittsburgh was an instant classic, coming down to the wire in dramatic fashion. Ohio State quarterback Mike Tomczak scored the game's first points on a 3-yard keeper, but Pitt quarterback John Congemi answered with a 6-yard touchdown pass to Clint Wilson.

Buckeye running back Keith Byars scored on an 11-yard run before the half, sending the Scarlet and Gray into the locker room with a 14-7 lead.

After a scoreless third quarter, the game ramped up in the fourth. Wilson recovered a fumble in the end zone for a Pitt touchdown, tying the game at 14. Then Byars returned the ensuing kickoff to the house for a 21-14 Ohio State advantage.

Congemi connected with Dwight Collins for a touchdown, but the ambitious Panthers attempted a two-point conversion and failed, leaving OSU in front 21-20.

With just 2:39 left, Pitt kicker Tom Everett hit a 37-yard field goal, giving Pitt a 23-21 lead, and the Panthers appeared to have clinched the game. But with 39 seconds left, Tomczak threw to Thad Jemison for a game-winning 39-yard touchdown, and Ohio State won 28-23.

2003 Fiesta Bowl (2002 season): Ohio State 31, Miami (Fla.) 24 (2OT)

No. 2 Ohio State entered the 2003 Fiesta Bowl, which also served as the BCS National Championship Game, against No. 1 Miami (Fla.) as 11½-point underdogs.

The Hurricanes took the first lead on a Ken Dorsey 25-yard touchdown pass to Roscoe Parrish with 4:09 left in the first quarter.

Buckeye safety Mike Doss snagged Dorsey's second interception of the day and returned the ball 35 yards to the Miami 17-yard line. The Hurricane defense stiffened near the goal line, but Ohio State quarterback Craig Krenzel punched the ball in on fourth-and-goal from the 1-yard line.

On Miami's first play from scrimmage after the touchdown, Dorsey fumbled, and Darrion Scott recovered for the Scarlet and Gray. Ohio State freshman running back Maurice Clarett scored a 7-yard touchdown to give the Buckeyes a 14-7 halftime lead.

On a third-and-15 in the third quarter, Krenzel connected with Chris Gamble for a 57-yard reception down to the Miami 6-yard line. Then the Buckeye signal caller was picked off by standout Miami safety Sean Taylor, who returned the ball 28 yards before Clarett chased him down, stripped the ball and

recovered it. Ohio State capitalized with a Mike Nugent field goal to make it 17-7 at 8:33 of the third.

Miami running back Willis McGahee scored on a 9-yard touchdown to make it a 17-14 game late in the third quarter. The Hurricanes and Buckeyes both missed field goals to keep it a three-point game in the fourth quarter.

Todd Sievers finally connected on a field goal from 40 yards out to tie the game at 17 with one second showing on the regulation clock and send it to overtime.

Miami started with the ball in the extra period, and Dorsey hit Kellen Winslow Jr. for a 7-yard touchdown and a 24-17 lead.

Facing fourth-and-14 from the Miami 29 and needing a touchdown to tie, Krenzel found Michael Jenkins for a 17-yard completion. The stout Hurricane defense forced another fourth down, and this time the Buckeyes needed 3 yards. Krenzel threw incomplete for Gamble in the end zone, but Miami defender Glenn Sharpe was called for pass interference. Three plays later, Krenzel punched the ball in from 1 yard out to tie the game.

Clarett scored on a 5-yard touchdown run to open the second overtime, and Nugent's extra point gave Ohio State a 31-24 lead. The Buckeye defense buckled down, forcing a fourth-and-3, where Dorsey hit Winslow Jr. for a 7-yard gain and a face-mask penalty set up Miami with a first-and-5 from the 6-yard line.

Dorsey tried to throw to Andre Johnson, but a pass interference gave the Hurricanes a first-and-goal opportunity from the 2. Ohio State's defense dug in and held Miami to 1 yard on three plays, setting up fourth-and-goal from the 1.

Dorsey dropped back and the Buckeye pass rush led by Cie Grant forced him to throw incomplete, ending the double-overtime thriller with Ohio State winning the BCS national championship 31-24.

Despite throwing for only 122 yards with two picks, Krenzel was Fiesta Bowl Offensive MVP because of his game-high 81 rushing yards and two touchdowns. Doss was Defensive MVP with nine tackles (three solo), including a half tackle for loss, one interception and one pass breakup.

2004 Fiesta Bowl (2003 season): Ohio State 35, Kansas State 28

The season did not go as expected for the 2003 Buckeyes as they went 10-2 with regular-season losses at Wisconsin and at Michigan following their 14-0 national title run the prior year.

No. 7 Ohio State met No. 8 Kansas State, which was 11-2 following an upset 35-7 win over No. 1 Oklahoma in the Big 12 Championship Game.

The Wildcats' went three-and-out on their first three possessions of the game, including during their third drive when they had to punt from their own 7-yard line. Ohio State's Harlen Jacobs blocked the K-State punt and John Hollins returned it for a 7-yard score, putting the Buckeyes up 7-0 early.

Later in the first quarter, Krenzel connected with Santonio Holmes on a 6-yard score, pushing the lead to 14-0. In the second quarter, Krenzel fired a 17-yard pass to Jenkins for another touchdown pass, giving the Scarlet and Gray a 21-0 lead.

The Wildcats would not go away, with standout running back Darren Sproles rushing for a 6-yard score to cut the Buckeyes' lead to 21-7 before halftime.

Kansas State quarterback Ell Roberson scrambled 14 yards for a touchdown, closing the gap to 21-14 at the 8:59 mark of the third. Krenzel responded with his second touchdown to Jenkins, this time from eight yards out.

Later in the third quarter, Krenzel hooked up with Holmes again for a 31-yard touchdown, giving Ohio State a 35-14 advantage heading into the final frame.

Kansas State's Ayo Saba answered with a three-yard rushing touchdown, cutting the deficit to two scores. Roberson scored again on another rushing touchdown, making it 35-28 with 2:47 to play, but the Buckeyes were able to hold off the Wildcats.

Krenzel was named the Fiesta Bowl Offensive MVP with his four touchdown passes, while A.J. Hawk earned Defensive MVP with 10 tackles (six solo), including 1½ tackles for loss and one pass breakup.

2006 Fiesta Bowl (2005 season): Ohio State 34, Notre Dame 20

Two years later, No. 4 Ohio State met No. 5 Notre Dame in the 2006 Fiesta Bowl.

The Fighting Irish struck first with a 20-yard touchdown run by tailback Darius Walker, but Ohio State answered with a 56-yard touchdown pass from Troy Smith to Ted Ginn Jr.

In the second quarter, Ginn took a wide receiver reverse 68 yards for a score. Then with 2:21 until halftime, Smith found Holmes for an 85-yard touchdown pass, giving the Buckeyes a 21-7 halftime lead.

Walker scored again for the Fighting Irish, but after a missed extra point, Ohio State still led 21-13.

Notre Dame's defense held the Scarlet and Gray to two field goals, and with five minutes left Walker's third rushing score made it a onecore game at 27-20.

While the Buckeyes were trying to run out the clock, tailback Antonio Pittman gashed the Fighting Irish for a 60-yard touchdown run, securing the 34-20 Ohio State victory.

Smith won Fiesta Bowl Offensive MVP with 342 passing yards and two touchdowns along with 66 rushing yards, while Hawk earned another Defensive MVP honor with 12 tackles (nine solo), including 3½ TFL and two sacks of his future brother-in-law Brady Quinn.

2009 Fiesta Bowl (2008 season): Texas 24, Ohio State 21

After Texas was passed over in the selection for the 2009 BCS National Championship Game, the Longhorns were selected to represent the Big 12 in the Fiesta Bowl.

The Buckeyes were selected as an "at-large" school from among the eligible teams. When the bowl bids were announced, the sports betting line opened with Texas as 10-point favorites, marking the most of any of the 2009 BCS bowls.

Ohio State led the game first with a first-quarter, 51-yard field goal by Aaron Pettrey. Hunter Lawrence answered with a 27-yard field goal in the second quarter, and Ryan Pretorius knocked home a 30-yard

field goal for the Buckeyes for a 6-3 halftime lead.

Longhorn quarterback Colt McCoy helped Texas take the lead on a 14-yard rushing touchdown in the third quarter. Later in the frame, McCoy connected with Quan Cosby for a 7-yard touchdown pass to make it 17-6.

Pettrey nailed another field goal from 44 yards out early in the fourth quarter to cut the Longhorn lead to eight. Todd Boeckman threw a 5-yard touchdown to Terrelle Pryor, but the Buckeyes' two-point try failed.

Ohio State running back Daniel "Boom" Herron scored on a 15-yard touchdown run with 2:05 left. The Buckeyes went for two again and failed but led 21-17.

McCoy rose to the occasion, hitting Cosby for a 26-yard touchdown and beating the Buckeyes with just 16 seconds left with a final of 24-21.

2016 Fiesta Bowl (2015 season): Ohio State 44, Notre Dame 28

Ohio State running back Ezekiel Elliott scored the game's first touchdown on a two-yard rush, putting the No. 7 Buckeyes up 7-0 on the No. 8 Fighting Irish.

Buckeye quarterback J.T. Barrett added to the lead with a 15-yard touchdown pass to Michael Thomas. In the second quarter, Notre Dame cut the lead in half with a 3-yard rushing score by Josh Adams.

A pair of 1-yard rushing touchdowns from Elliott pushed Ohio State's first-half lead to 28-7 with the game looking like it might get out of hand.

Notre Dame quarterback DeShone Kizer scored on a 1-yard touchdown with 29 seconds until halftime.

Kizer kept the momentum going in the second half, finding Chris Brown for a 4-yard score to cut the Scarlet and Gray lead to 28-21. Elliott found the end zone for the fourth time on a 47-yard touchdown run to push the lead back to two scores.

Sean Nuernberger nailed a 37-yard field goal to put Ohio State up 38-21 early in the fourth quarter.

Kizer quickly responded with an 81-yard touchdown pass to Will Fuller. The Buckeyes held on with two more Nuernberger three-pointers, winning 44-28.

The Buckeyes dominated the Fighting Irish on the ground, out-rushing them 285-121. Barrett earned Fiesta Bowl Offensive MVP with 211 yards and one touchdown through the air and 96 yards on the ground. Eli Apple won Defensive MVP with five tackles (four solo) and one pass breakup.

2016 Fiesta Bowl (2016 season): Clemson 31, Ohio State 0

The winner of the 2016 Fiesta Bowl between No. 2 Ohio State and No. 3 Clemson would advance to the CFP National Championship Game.

Clemson became just the second team in college football history to shut out the Buckeyes in a bowl game, joining U.C. Berkeley from the 1921 Rose Bowl. The game also marked the first and only time that Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer was shut out in his 219-game career.

The Tigers dominated the Buckeyes, out-gaining them 470-215.

Ohio State cornerback Gareon Conley intercepted a Deshaun Watson pass on Clemson's first drive, giving the Buckeyes the ball on the Clemson 33. But Ohio State gained only three yards, and Tyler Durbin missed a 47-yard field goal.

The Tigers went down the field and connected on a three-pointer. The Scarlet and Gray moved the ball into scoring range but faltered, setting up a fourth-and-18, where Durbin missed another 47-yard attempt.

Clemson scored a touchdown on its next drive, making it 10-0, and Ohio State's ensuing possessions transpired as follows: punt, punt, punt, punt, halftime, fumble, punt, punt, interception, interception, turnover on downs, end of the game.

Clemson destroyed Ohio State, 31-0, and then defeated Alabama to win the title.

The Buckeyes will have the opportunity to avenge that loss to Clemson on Dec. 28 in the 2019 Fiesta Bowl, which serves as the first round of the CFP.

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