

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 32, No. 12

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Nov. 30, 2012



## Fantastic Finish

*Buckeyes Cap Undefeated Season, Beat Michigan*

KEVIN DYE

**TIME TO CELEBRATE** – Junior tailback Carlos Hyde (34) flexes after scoring a 3-yard touchdown during the first quarter Nov. 24 against Michigan. Hyde finished with 146 yards and sealed the victory with several key runs during Ohio State's final drive as the Buckeyes earned a 26-21 win over U-M.

By MARCUS HARTMAN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

If ever there were a time to forget about the records in the 109th football game between Ohio State and Michigan, the 5:39 mark of the fourth quarter was as good as any.

The Wolverines called timeout after having just converted a third-and-10 with a 10-yard pass from Devin Gardner to Jeremy Gallon, who created just enough space against Ohio State safety C.J. Barnett to haul in a pass at the Michigan 41-yard line.

A tight play in a tight game, it led one to wonder if the Buckeyes would pay for letting their old rivals hang around in front of 105,899 fans at Ohio Stadium. Their hopes of a legacy-cementing win in a season unlike any other were on the line.

The third-down conversion gave the Wolverines life less than a minute of game action after the Buckeyes had for the third time in the second half and fourth time in the game settled for a field-goal attempt after moving the ball inside the Michigan 30-yard line. Ohio State had another drive in the fourth quarter stall at the Michigan 28 thanks to a lost fumble.

The hosts had already committed two turnovers, missed a few too many tackles and given the Wolverines three first downs via penalty.

Gallon's move on Barnett, who picked him up just before the snap of the ball as the Buckeyes looked confused by the Wolverines' alignment, was beginning to look symbolic, like it might be the type of close play that turned a game that has so many times through the years gone down to the wire.

Except it wasn't, as 2012 turned out to be a different kind of season that would conclude with a different kind of game.

The 20th-ranked Wolverines were called for holding on the next play,

negating a 9-yard scramble by Gardner, who then overthrew tight end Devin Funchess down the middle on first-and-20.

One play later, the junior signal caller misfired again, a mistake that was much more damaging as it landed in the arms of Barnett near midfield.

Suddenly with their fate in their own hands again, the Buckeye offense did not waste its last opportunity, but the unit still made it interesting.

After a false start on tight end Jeff Heuerman gave them a first-and-15 back on their own side of the field at the 47-yard line with 4:50 to go, the No. 4 Buckeyes flirted with disaster when center Corey Linsley's snap from center sailed high and through quarterback Braxton Miller's hands.

Fortunately for the home team, it ricocheted to running back Carlos Hyde, who managed to make 3 yards. After Miller went for 5 yards around left end on second down, the Buckeyes found themselves needing 7 more or else facing a punt back to the Wolverines with time left for a comeback.

That would never come to pass as an offensive line that more than any other unit on the team represents the progress the Buckeyes have made this season opened a gigantic hole on the left side. Hyde took advantage, slashing for 13 yards to earn a fresh set of downs and put the Wolverines behind the eight ball.

Sensing his opponent about to go down for the count, Hyde turned to the Michigan sideline and used an imaginary spoon to scoop invisible food into his mouth, a clear shot at the Wolverines and their star quarterback Denard Robinson, who had made the same gesture following a 67-yard touchdown run in the second quarter as well as throughout a 40-34 Michigan win in Ann Arbor the previous season.

Such tit for tat might seem petty, but this was a rivalry game. "The" rivalry game, some might say. Carrying over a narrative from one game to the next is part of its charm, and so another chapter was written.

**Gift Guide Is In This Issue**  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin's Annual  
Holiday Gift Guide is included in this  
issue. The guide has a wealth of gift  
ideas for the OSU fan on your list.

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## OPINION

# Undefeated Season Something To Be Celebrated



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Charter Member

Ohio State put the finishing touches on a perfect season with a 26-21 victory over archrival Michigan, and Ohio Stadium hadn't even emptied before the nattering nabobs of negativity began their dismissive chorus to belittle the Buckeyes' accomplishment.

It seems that many pundits around the country don't believe Ohio State "deserves" to be in this year's national championship conversation. Unfortunately, the sorriest part of their argument has nothing to do with NCAA sanctions or postseason bans.

In their warped sense of sensibility, the Buckeyes have not performed to the level of a championship contender. Therefore, OSU and its perfect record are a sort of anomaly born of a weak conference affiliation and an even weaker schedule.

After all, didn't the team struggle against the likes of California, Indiana and Purdue? Ohio State should probably thank the NCAA for issuing a postseason ban that prevents its team from being embarrassed by the unrelenting might of Notre Dame or Alabama in a national championship game.

Of course, that's what those same so-called experts were saying a decade ago when the Buckeyes were on their way to play the supposedly invincible defending national champion Miami Hurricanes.

Those of us rooted in reality realized long ago that Ohio State was going to be the longest of long shots to win this year's Associated Press version of the national title. Then when Notre Dame completed its perfect regular season a few hours after OSU completed its own, the Buckeyes' tiny window of opportunity closed completely.

Still, the fact of the matter is that Ohio State completed a perfect season against all odds, and it should be rewarded regardless of how or against whom it was achieved.

The time-honored tradition among most human pollsters is that undefeated teams are ranked ahead of those which have been beaten. That's why OSU should be no lower than No. 2 in the AP poll – and 17 of the 60 persons participating in the rankings released Nov. 25 agreed.

Likewise, it's not too difficult to understand how 19 other voters placed the Buckeyes third or fourth on their AP ballots. On paper, Ohio State would likely struggle with either No. 2 Alabama or No. 3 Georgia, the teams that have qualified for the SEC elimination game that will determine Notre Dame's opponent in the national championship contest.

And then there are those eight voters who placed Ohio State eighth or lower on their ballots. That included two – Pete DiPrimio of the Fort Wayne (Ind.) News-Sentinel and Josh Kendall of The State in Columbia, S.C. – who didn't even have the Buckeyes among their top 10.

DiPrimio had OSU at No. 11, behind a foursome of two-loss teams, while Kendall had the Buckeyes at No. 12, behind five teams with two losses. Of course, Kendall likely let his dog perform his balloting. He voted two-loss Texas A&M second overall behind Notre Dame despite the fact the Aggies tied only for the fourth-best record in the SEC.

Of course, it really doesn't matter who finishes anywhere but first in these beauty contests. For example, can you name the team that finished No. 3 last year behind national championship combatants Alabama and LSU? (It was Oklahoma State.)

Whether Ohio State finished second this year, or third, or even 10th or 11th really doesn't mean anything because I've got news for the Pete DiPrimios and Josh Kendalls of the world: The Buckeyes are going to be good

again next year – very good – and it's going to take much more than a computer keystroke to keep the team from contending for the national championship.

With the exception of most of its starting defensive line, Ohio State loses very little talent heading into 2013. And if you look at the way the Buckeyes recruited last year, the defensive line will be far from a liability.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Furthermore, the schedule sets up much the way the one this past season did. Nonconference opponents are Buffalo, San Diego State, California and FCS member Florida A&M, teams that combined for a 20-27 record this past season, and the Buckeyes' only real Big Ten threats should be early in the season with back-to-back games against Wisconsin and Northwestern and the regular-season finale at Michigan.

Then there is the head coach. For all of the miracles Urban Meyer has performed during his 11-year career, he has been his most miraculous during the second season at each of his previous three stops.

At Bowling Green in 2002, the Falcons won nine games for the first time in eight seasons. Two years later at Utah, the Utes set a school record by going 12-0 and became the first-ever BCS buster, finishing off that season with a 35-7 mauling of Pittsburgh in the Fiesta Bowl.

Then in 2006 at Florida, Meyer's team went 13-1 and pummeled Ohio State in the BCS National Championship Game.

Add to those nuggets the fact that there is very little evidence that anyone in the Big Ten is rising to meet Meyer's challenge. In the final two games this season, neither opposing head coach seemed very eager to engage Meyer or his team.

Bret Bielema, whose Wisconsin team had nothing to lose in a Senior Day battle with the Buckeyes, elected to punt three times inside OSU territory, including once at the Ohio State 30-yard line in the first quarter of a still scoreless game. A week later, Michigan's Brady Hoke went away from the stretch plays that were working for his team in the early going and repeatedly tested the middle of the line of scrimmage with his running attack long after the Buckeyes had claimed the interior for their own.

Sports Illustrated writer Pete Thamel perhaps put it best when he wrote in his magazine's Nov. 19 issue, "For a league in transition, Meyer is driving the pace car."

That's not exactly music to the ears of Big Ten opponents – or apparently sportswriters around the country. Then again, the truth always seems to hurt a little.

## What If? What If Indeed

It was surreal to watch Jim Tressel hoisted upon the shoulders of his 2002 team during a brief recognition ceremony for the national title team between the first and second quarters of this year's OSU-Michigan game.

The coach was greeted with thunderous applause and a standing ovation from most of the 105,899 fans in attendance, but there remains a small faction unwilling to forgive Tressel for the transgressions that got him fired and the program on NCAA probation.

Many blame athletic director Gene Smith for the fact the 2012 team cannot play in

a bowl game, but that blame is largely misplaced. While it is true Smith grossly miscalculated how the NCAA would rule, ultimately he is not the man responsible for the sanctions the program was forced to accept.

Still, what should not be lost is what Tressel accomplished during his decade-long tenure. Those who consider the former coach a pariah should find a little forgiveness in their hearts and remember where the program was before Tressel arrived.

And that leads to the "what-if" game most fans are playing right now. You might ask what if the Buckeyes could play in the post-season this year, but you might also want to ponder what if Tressel had come forward in 2010 and accepted suspensions for six of his players, including starting quarterback Terrelle Pryor?

Ohio State would have had to suffer through a mediocre season that year, but Tressel would likely still be head coach. And what if he were? Would the Buckeyes still have gone 12-0 this season? Would Meyer still be in the broadcast booth or might he have just completed his first season as head coach at Penn State? And if so, would the Nittany Lions be the team that went 12-0?

Those "what-if" scenarios cut both ways, you know.

## Some Final Tidbits

- For probably the first time in its 90-year history, Ohio Stadium played host Nov. 24 to five different Ohio State head coaches. Earle Bruce and John Cooper watched from the press box, Tressel was honored as part of the 2002 national champs, and Luke Fickell and Urban Meyer coached the game from the sideline.

- Veteran journalists got together in the press box before the game to compare the number of OSU-Michigan games they had covered. I was somewhere near the top of the pack, having now covered The Game a total of 24 times – 17 of those for BSB. But we all paled in comparison to longtime OSU sports information director Marv Homan, the always personable octogenarian who was attending his 56th meeting of Ohio State and Michigan.

- Ohio State punter Ben Buchanan has exhausted his eligibility, but don't expect Braxton Miller to audition for the job in 2013. As the clock ticked off its final seconds, the OSU quarterback took the football and jubilantly punted it into the air – but the kick went off the side of Miller's foot and landed awkwardly only about 20 yards away.

- Carlos Hyde forever stamped his name on the OSU-Michigan rivalry with a 146-yard rushing effort mostly through the Wolverines' defensive front. Only six Buckeyes have rushed for more yards against U-M in the series – Chris "Beanie" Wells (222 in 2007), David Francis (186 in 1962), Carlos Snow (170 in 1988), Bob White (163 in 1957), Archie Griffin (163 in 1973) and Bob Ferguson (152 in 1961).

- Ferguson's effort in that 1961 game was part of a four-touchdown performance during a 50-20 win for the Buckeyes in Ann Arbor. That was the game in which Woody Hayes called for a two-point conversion pass following his team's final touchdown, a call the coach was quizzed about many years later. When asked why he went for two in that situation, Hayes simply replied, "Because I couldn't go for three." Most fans mistakenly believe that quote arose following Ohio State's 50-14 win over Michigan in 1968. But the Buckeyes missed their final two-point conversion try in that game.



## COVER STORY

# OSU's Seniors Impressed Meyer, Led Team

Continued From Page 1

"That did get us fired up a little bit," Ohio State linebacker Zach Boren said. "On that drive, we were all instigating him to do that, trying to tell him to do that. Carlos is a hell of a runner. He's gotten better and better each week. When we need to put the team on someone's back, it's Carlos."

And so it would be as the final words went to Hyde, who seared them into Ohio State-Michigan lore by rumbling for 6 yards on first down and then another 5 on second. The Wolverines probably knew what was coming by that point, but it didn't matter. Hyde pushed through tacklers, reaching forward for every inch he could get on the last carry until he was brought down at the Michigan 21-yard line.

He got up making that same "feed me" gesture as the officiating crew signaled a first down, and he took extra delight from the situation.

"It was great to seal the game like that, that little celebration thing," Hyde said. "I had seen Michigan's quarterback doing it. Denard did it when he scored. I wanted to show him what eating really was."

That was all the yardage the Buckeyes would need. After Miller lined up in the victory formation three times and took three knees, it was time to celebrate in the Horseshoe.

Players dumped a bucket of Gatorade on the back of Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer, and fans swarmed the field in jubilation.

Everyone gathered at the south end zone to celebrate some more, first dancing to the "Buckeye Swag" song that is becoming a favorite of the band, fans and players then closing it down with the more familiar tones of the alma mater, "Carmen Ohio."

Then there was that little matter of the record to remember.

The Buckeyes were 12-0.

## A Lasting Legacy

Throughout the week leading up to The Game, Meyer expressed a clear narrative.

He wanted fans to know they should appreciate his seniors, a group of 21 players

who have been through quite a roller-coaster ride through the last four and in some cases five years in the program.

They signed with Ohio State during a decade (2001-10) that would include seven Big Ten championships, eight BCS bowl games and nine wins over Michigan, but they endured quite a bit of adversity by the time they were done wearing scarlet and gray.

NCAA violations committed by their teammates – and some of them – as well as head coach Jim Tressel threw the program into turmoil in late 2010. It led to the school stripping itself of all accomplishments from that season, forcing Tressel out the following May and stumbling through a 6-7 season in 2011.

Meyer's hiring two days after the 2011 loss to Michigan was supposed to represent the end of the bad news, but there was one more big blow.

The NCAA delivered a sucker punch on Dec. 20, 2011, when it announced that on top of scholarship reductions and probation, it was slapping a one-year postseason ban on the Buckeyes for the sum of their transgressions.

Ohio State director of athletics Gene Smith had already accepted a bid to the 2012 Gator Bowl for the 2011 team and told the media, Meyer and the players not to expect any restrictions on postseason play for the following season, so the news came as quite a shock.

The players were doing community service when it broke, and Meyer moved quickly to call a team meeting to do some damage control.

After addressing the team in full, he held the seniors back for a more intimate chat.

"If I read the rules right, they can pick up and go without punishment," he said Nov. 19, referring to an NCAA rule that allows players on teams with postseason bans to transfer without penalty if the punishment extends through the end of their eligibility.

None took advantage of the provision, clearly impressing Meyer.

"I had no idea who they were, and they didn't know me, so it was a leap of faith. I think it was also the love for their school,"

Meyer said. "When you look at these kids, now that I know them, I know exactly why they stayed – for the love of Ohio State. It's really cool in this day and age to witness that. We're forever indebted to them because they didn't have to do what they did. I should say that because they certainly didn't owe Urban Meyer or his coaching staff a thing. Their love of this university was very apparent that day."

Such affection would continue to be tested, though, through grueling workouts – some starting at 5 a.m. – and practices leading up to a 2012 season that started amid uncertainty how well Meyer's methods would mesh with his new team.

When the last second had ticked off the last game of the season, none seemed to have any doubt they had made the right decision.

"It's my last game ever and I've put my heart and soul in this place," senior wide receiver Jake Stoneburner said. "To finish 12-0 is something I never would have imagined, but it's awesome."

Boren, a three-year starter at fullback who switched to linebacker to fill a need midway through his final campaign, concurred. He also credited Meyer's approach with getting the best out of the bunch.

"It's a tough team," Boren said. "It goes all the way from the seniors to the freshmen to the coaching staff. The way we trained during the offseason, the way these coaches grind us, the little stuff is just little (but) you almost make big things little. You always want to keep on going, you just keep trying."

"That's a big thing, especially in the offseason when we're working out. They're pushing us to the limit. You can always go a little bit more, a little bit farther. I think that's the M.O. of this team. You can always give more. When you think you've given your hardest, you can dig down and keep going."

The resolve was tested in the final game, as is probably fitting in a season that saw more than one win gutted out near the end.

On top of the aforementioned penalties, turnovers and missed tackles, the Buckeyes had to overcome the loss of one of their pillars of leadership just before game time.

Rumors that senior defensive end John

Simon would not be able to play in his class' final game began to circulate late the night before and proved to be true by game time. A right knee injury he suffered during a 21-14 overtime win at Wisconsin the week before had not healed to the point he could answer the bell against the Wolverines.

Simon was not even able to run out of the tunnel to greet Meyer like the rest of the seniors during pregame festivities, but the Buckeyes rose up in his absence.

Sophomore Michael Bennett and freshman Adolphus Washington came off the bench to help pick up the slack while alternating snaps depending on down and distance. Bennett helped stonewall the Wolverines' running attack and Washington contributed a sack and forced a fumble.

Playing on the opposite side of where Simon would have been, senior Nathan Williams was impressed with the play of the youngsters and said the team had little choice but to rally without one of its senior captains.

"We couldn't dwell on it," Williams said. "You get beat like that. So we did a great job just rallying together. John is – gosh, there are no words to describe the leadership that guy has and displays. He throws it all out for us. The least we could do is the same for them."

Simon was unable to practice in the week leading up to the Michigan game, but defensive coordinator Luke Fickell said the team was not told of his playing status until the morning of the game. That was Meyer's idea.

"He said we don't know for sure and this guy's going to battle, and if he has an opportunity he's going to be out there," Fickell said of Meyer's decision. "There's no one in that locker room who doesn't have the utmost respect for John Simon. Whether that was a boost or made anyone reach deeper, I know any one of us coaches and players in there would do anything for him because he'd do it for them."

What they did was bring home a perfect record and another pair of gold pants, the third for the Youngstown (Ohio) Cardinal Mooney product thanks to wins over the Wolverines during his freshman and sophomore campaigns.

"I had a bad feeling early in the week when I saw his knee," Meyer said. "It's not a structural issue, it's just (bursa) swelling we couldn't get out. And my man was in the training room early in the morning until late at night doing everything they could."

"When they DQ'd him, it was like a possessed group on defense. I know why – because our brother was down and we presented him the game ball, which was deserving."

## The Arrival Of The End

Despite the good feelings from the win over the Wolverines, there was no escaping the fact it is the last one of the season.

Wisconsin and Nebraska will play in the Big Ten Championship Game in Indianapolis on Dec. 1.

"That's fine," junior wide receiver Corey "Philly" Brown said. "We beat both teams that are in the Big Ten Championship Game. If these Big Ten teams don't know who the best team is now, they're just being a little biased. Everybody knows we're the best team in the Big Ten."

Stoneburner said he would probably still watch the game – "I don't have anything else to do," he replied when asked – but admitted wishing things were different.

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## COVER STORY

"Looking back now that we're 12-0 and started the season perfect, it kind of stinks," he said. "Who knows what could have happened. We'd be going to the Big Ten championship, maybe the national championship. I wish we were playing in a bowl game, but I'll take 12-0 any day of the week."

That was the prevailing thought in the postgame interview room following the joyous celebration.

Perhaps feelings will change as the final games across college football play out, but little bitterness could be detected in the Buckeyes after their 12th win of the season.

"Maybe at this time last year I felt bummed out that we can't go to a bowl game, but now I've been used to it for so long that we knew we weren't going, so the goal was just to win every game," Stoneburner said. "I can't really be upset with where we're at."

Meyer suggested some type of monument be put up to recognize the accomplishments of the group, just the sixth set of seniors to finish off an undefeated, untied season in Ohio State history, but he did not have anything specific in mind.

"Well, to be 12-0, it really hasn't sunk in yet," he said. "It's more the fact that we're going to lose (these guys). It's almost like you're losing some of your children when they go away to college. Our house is going to be empty. After our team meeting on Tuesday, we start a new journey. However, the foundation is really, really strong – couldn't be stronger because of our senior class. That's all I can think about."

"I want to make sure they're properly recognized as one of the great groups of seniors in the history of this program, however we're going to do that."

Asked what implications the 12-0 record has for the program, Stoneburner acknowledged the bar is set high for the future.

"I don't think anyone really expected Coach Meyer to come in and turn it around like he did, but for anyone who wants to be a Buckeye or is a Buckeye right now there is no better place to be," Stoneburner said. "It just shows how great of coaches we have. It's crazy to think we went undefeated."

Zach Domicone, another fifth-year senior who signed with Tressel in 2008 and endured not only the ups and downs of the team but a myriad of injuries, credited Meyer with getting the Buckeyes to this point. The special

teams stalwart had more trouble defining the legacy of his class, though.

"I don't know. You can't argue with undefeated," Domicone said. "12-0 is unbelievable. I know when we all came in we all had dreams and aspirations of winning national championships and Big Ten championships. It's just unbelievable all the ups and downs we've been through, especially the guys that have been here for five years. It's been an unbelievable journey, but I wouldn't have it any other way."

"This senior class, the way we went out and the way we came together as a team and had a refuse-to-lose mentality, not all of them were pretty, but to win 12 games in a row is something special. Just for the young guys to be a part of that and just see how

we came together as a team and how much team means, I think that was unbelievable for them to see."

Williams, who would have been out of eligibility last season if not for a knee injury that sidelined him for the last 12 games, admitted it has been a crazy five years for him and his classmates.

"Absolutely," he said. "We've been through a lot. All of the seniors and guys that were on the team, we took some punches, but it shows a lot how we responded to things. It's a shame we've got to end right now, but we couldn't end things any better than beating Michigan here. A credit to all the coaches and the seniors who stuck together. It's been amazing."

The former four-star recruit entered this season unsure how much he would be able to play as he continued to recover from microfracture surgery, but he turned out to be one of the most crucial players on the defensive front that helped shut out the Wolverines in the second half of his final game in scarlet and gray.

"Oh, it's unbelievable, man," Williams said. "I couldn't ask for anything more, I mean, other than a chance to play a couple more weeks. But it is what it is. This is how the 2012 team is going to be remembered, by going 12-0 and beating Michigan at home. I really wouldn't like to go out any other way than that."

A memorable record indeed.



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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

# Imperfect Victory Gives OSU Perfect Season

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Taking the easy way never seemed to fit Ohio State's style during the 2012 season, and the Buckeyes closed out their campaign in similar fashion, overcoming a host of problems, miscues and misfortune to post a 26-21 victory Nov. 24 over archrival Michigan and preserve only the sixth perfect season in program history.

In a game that provided four lead changes, the No. 4-ranked Buckeyes shook off a 21-20 halftime deficit by completely shutting down the Wolverines in the second half. U-M had 219 total yards in the opening 30 minutes but managed only 60 the rest of the way as the Ohio State defense amped up its pressure. The Buckeyes also forced four turnovers, three of them in the crucial second half when both teams were jockeying for field position.

OSU had more than its share of errors, too, turning the ball over twice, including a muffed punt return and committing nine penalties for 74 yards – many of those infractions keeping Michigan drives alive.

But the offense totaled 396 yards for the game while the defense controlled tempo for much of the second half. The Buckeyes held a lopsided advantage of 36:50 to 23:10 in time of possession, including 19:31 to 10:29 in the second half. That included 10:29 to 4:31 in the fourth quarter.

As Ohio State seemed to grow stronger as the game wore on, the Buckeyes were able to put the finishing touches on a perfect season in front of 105,899 fans at Ohio Stadium, a crowd that included members of the 2002 national championship team. That was the most recent OSU team to ride through an entire season with an unblemished record.

"To be 12-0, it really hasn't sunk in," first-year head coach Urban Meyer said with a smile. "I imagine tonight there are a lot of people in this great state very proud of their football team – their football team. No one else's. This is the state of Ohio's football team, and I'm sure they're very proud. ...

"For the moment, this is as good as it gets."

Because of NCAA sanctions, the Buckeyes are unable to go on to play for a Big Ten or national championship. But that didn't stop Meyer from being asked if his undefeated team deserves to be at least considered for the Associated Press version of the national title.

"I don't know enough to ...," the OSU head coach replied before readjusting his thought pattern. "I think this team could play and compete with any team in the United States of America as of now. ... I'm not going to get into the what-ifs. You can't control what you can't control.

"We're 12-0 and I'm going to see to it

that when you walk into that Woody Hayes facility, this team will never be forgotten. Because they deserve that."

The Buckeyes were led by junior tailback Carlos Hyde, who turned in 26 powerful carries for 146 yards and one touchdown. The yardage figure was the seventh-highest total ever for an OSU player against Michigan, and it was Hyde to whom his coaches and teammates turned in the fourth quarter to ice the game, and the junior responded with three straight carries – two for first downs – that helped close out the proceedings.

Sophomore quarterback Braxton Miller had some trouble in the running game for the second week in a row, totaling only 57 net yards on 20 carries. But Miller made up for it with his precision in the passing game, completing 14 of 18 attempts for 189 yards and a touchdown against a Michigan defense that entered the game ranked No. 1 in the nation against the pass.

On the receiving end of eight of Miller's passes was junior receiver Corey "Philly" Brown, who finished with a career-high 95 yards and a touchdown. Sophomore wide-out Devin Smith added two catches for 63 yards, including a 52-yarder that set up the Buckeyes' first score.

Michigan was led on offense by the two-headed quarterback monster of senior Denard Robinson and junior Devin Gardner.

Robinson started the game under center but did not throw the ball perhaps due to an elbow injury suffered in late October. But the Big Ten's all-time leading rusher among quarterbacks did plenty of damage with his legs, rushing for 124 yards and a touchdown in the first half.

After intermission, however, Robinson was a nonfactor. He carried only four times in the second half for a net of minus-2 yards.

That left it up to Gardner, who had performed well in the three games since moving from wide receiver to take over for Robinson. But the junior QB who entered the game completing 65.7 percent of his attempts with a lofty passer rating of 190.22 was not up to the task this time. Gardner managed to complete only 11 of 20 passes for 171 yards, one touchdown and one interception. He also fumbled twice and was sacked four times.

Robinson, who insisted after the game he could have thrown the ball if necessary, said the game boiled down to the Wolverines simply making too many mistakes.

"We had too many turnovers," he said. "That's why we lost. In order to win this game, you have to have control of the ball. Unfortunately, we did not have much success running the ball in the second half."

The Wolverines were limited to only 108 yards rushing for the game, their lowest total since gaining 95 during a 23-9 loss at Nebraska on Oct. 27. In the second half, they



JOSH WINSLOW

**HELLO DOWN THERE** – Senior fullback-turned-linebacker Zach Boren (44) looms over Michigan quarterback Devin Gardner (12) after sacking him in the second quarter.

were completely stoned by the Buckeyes to the tune of minus-4 yards on 12 carries.

Defensively, it was a standout effort by Ohio State made even more impressive considering the loss of senior lineman John Simon, who missed the game with a knee injury. But helping to pick up the slack was fellow senior co-captain Zach Boren, who had a team-high nine tackles, including two for loss and a sack. Boren also had a fumble recovery.

Sophomore cornerback Bradley Roby added eight stops, including seven solos, and sophomore linebacker Ryan Shazier contributed five tackles, including 2½ for loss and a sack. Defensive linemen Michael Bennett and Adolphus Washington also had sacks, while junior safety C.J. Barnett grabbed the game's only interception.

Sophomore linebacker Desmond Morgan led the Wolverines with a game-high 11 tackles while defensive tackle Will Campbell added 10 stops, all of them assists. U-M also had four sacks – one each by sophomore linebacker Jake Ryan, junior free safety Thomas Gordon, sophomore defensive end Frank Clark and junior defensive tackle Jibreel Black.

The winning points were provided by OSU junior kicker Drew Basil, who connected on a pair of extra points and 4 of 5 field-goal attempts, including a career-best 52-yarder at the end of the first half. Basil entered the game having tried only six three-pointers all season, making four of them – the longest a modest 35-yarder Oct. 13 dur-

ing the Buckeyes' 52-49 win at Indiana.

## Quick-Strike Scoring Early

Ohio State wasted no time getting things started on the blustery, cold afternoon that produced a few snow flurries just before kickoff. The Buckeyes covered 75 yards on the game's opening possession, and they took only six plays and 2:19 to reach the end zone.

After Hyde carried three times to begin the game, the score was set up after a 52-yard pass play from Miller to a wide-open Smith, who had beaten U-M senior cornerback J.T. Floyd deep down the field.

Two plays later, Hyde danced out of the tackle of freshman defensive end Keith Heitzman and through Gordon's attempt at an arm-tackle on his way to a 3-yard touchdown. Basil came on to add the extra point, and Ohio State appeared to be off and running with a 7-0 lead at the 12:41 mark of the first quarter.

Michigan looked like it was going to answer immediately when the Buckeyes' ensuing kickoff went out of bounds, setting the Wolverines up on their own 35, and Robinson got loose on his team's first play from scrimmage for a 30-yard bolt into OSU territory. But on the fifth play of the drive, Washington got around U-M junior tackle Taylor Lewan and swatted the ball loose from Gardner's grasp. Boren recovered at the OSU 33 to end the threat.

The Wolverines came back on their next possession, however, striking for a three-



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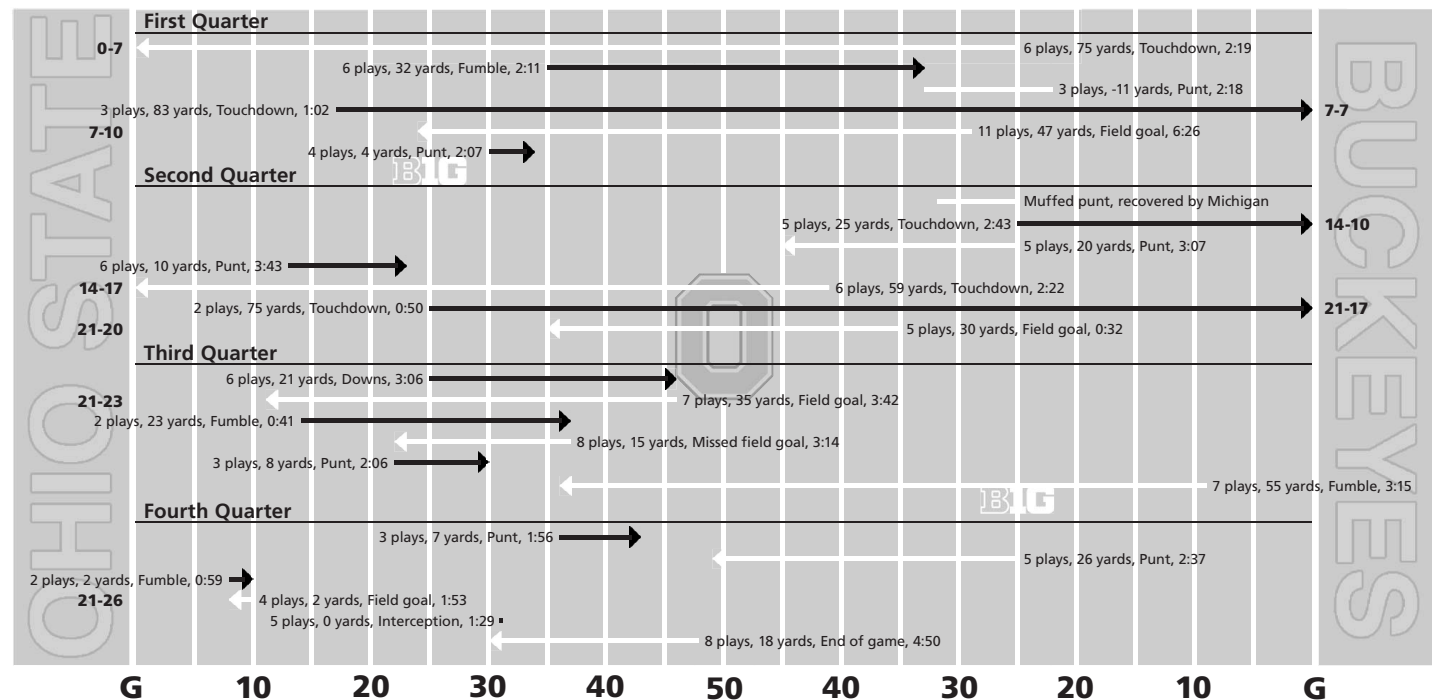
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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

## Drive Chart

Michigan →

← Ohio State



play, 83-yard drive that took a mere 26 seconds.

After a first-down incompletion and an 8-yard run by tailback Vincent Smith, Gardner found senior wide receiver Roy Roundtree along the sideline and behind the OSU secondary.

Roundtree ran out of Barnett's tackle attempt and then picked up a downfield block from fellow receiver Drew Dileo, who kept OSU junior safety Christian Bryant at bay all the way to the goal line as Roundtree completed a 75-yard touchdown catch-and-run.

Roundtree finished the game with three catches for 92 yards and the score, and his TD and the subsequent point-after kick from junior Brendan Gibbons tied the score at 7 with 7:10 still left in the first period.

The Buckeyes came back to answer that score with Basil's first field goal, but they could conceivably have had more. On the seventh play of their ensuing drive, a Miller-to-Brown connection for 19 yards converted a third-and-14 situation and got the ball to the Michigan 24.

Unfortunately, OSU went in reverse after that. The Buckeyes picked up back-to-back penalties – one for a false start, the other for holding – to give them a first-and-25 back at the U-M 39, and after sophomore receiver Evan Spencer got 9 of those yards back on a reception, Ohio State was flagged for another false start.

The offense never got back ahead of the chains and eventually settled for a 41-yard field goal from Basil to make it 10-7 with 0:37 remaining in the first quarter.

Repeated mistakes on the part of Ohio State led directly to Michigan's next score.

Early in the second period, the Wolverines were stopped on downs and forced to punt, but the Buckeyes not only roughed Michigan punter Will Hagerup on the play, Brown muffed the return and U-M safety Marvin Robinson recovered on the Ohio State 25.

Three plays later, the OSU defense had Michigan stopped again when Gardner threw incomplete on third down. But this time freshman defensive end Noah Spence was called for hitting Gardner late on the play, giving the Wolverines another fresh set of downs.

The third time was the charm for the visitors. Three plays after the personal foul, Gardner took a keeper into the end zone from 2 yards out. Gibbons came on to add the PAT, and Michigan had regained the lead at 14-10 with 10:42 showing on the second-quarter clock.

Then after looking more like a sub-500 team for much of the second quarter rather than one going for an unbeaten season, the Buckeyes suddenly jolted back to life late in the period with a six-play drive that covered 59 yards and took less than 2½ minutes.

The possession provided a steady diet of Hyde, who carried four times for a total of 40 yards. The drive culminated with a short flip from Miller that Brown turned into a 14-yard touchdown play, and after Basil added another extra point, suddenly the Buckeyes were back in front at 17-14 with 1:30 to go before the half.

That cushion didn't last long, however. On the second play of the Wolverines' ensuing drive, Robinson took the shotgun snap and moved quickly to his right. As he tucked the ball and cut up the field, Robinson was met at the U-M 45 by Bryant and cornerback Travis Howard, who sandwiched the Michigan quarterback between them.

Somewhat, though, Robinson bounced off both defenders and never broke stride, motoring all the way to the end zone for a 67-yard touchdown romp that stunned the Ohio Stadium crowd. Gibbons came on for the extra point, and the Wolverines had the lead again, this time at 21-17 with 40 seconds remaining until halftime.

The Buckeyes used what little time remained in the first half wisely.

## The Bottom Line

**The game was over when ...** Carlos Hyde thundered through a huge hole in the Michigan defense on third-and-7 with the fourth-quarter game clock winding under 3:20. That 13-yard gain, coupled with another first-down run two plays later by the OSU tailback, assured the Wolverines would not get the ball back and preserved the Buckeyes' 26-21 victory.

**Game ball goes to ...** 21 Ohio State seniors. They persevered through a lengthy NCAA investigation and subsequent sanctions, a pair of coaching changes and last year's 6-7 season to celebrate this year's perfect season and all of the deserved accolades that go with it.

**Stat of the game ...** 6. Ohio State finished with a 12-0 record and marked only the sixth perfect season in the 123-year history of the program. The 2012 Buckeyes join the 1916 (7-0), 1944 (9-0), 1954 (10-0), 1968 (10-0) and 2002 (14-0) teams as the only ones to complete an unbeaten and untied season.

– Mark Rea

After a 21-yard kickoff return by Roby, Miller got loose for a 17-yard scamper – his longest run of the first half – and then completed short sideline passes of 5 yards to Brown and 8 yards to Hyde to get the ball to the Michigan 35.

That was close enough for Basil to bang home his 52-yard field goal as time expired to make it 21-20 Michigan as the teams headed into the locker rooms.

Basil pushed the Buckeyes back into the lead midway through the third quarter with a 28-yard field goal, the product of a short field after the Ohio State defense had stuffed Robinson for a 2-yard loss on a fourth-and-3 play at the Michigan 46.

Then after the Buckeyes had taken that 23-21 advantage with 8:12 to go in the third, they appeared to seize the momentum outright when Bryant popped the ball loose from Robinson and defensive

end Nathan Williams recovered at the U-M 37.

Ohio State couldn't do anything with the good fortune, however. The offense did move to within striking distance at the Michigan 4-yard line with a second-and-1, but Miller was sacked for a 6-yard loss and then a third-down shotgun snap sailed over the quarterback's head and Miller had to smother it at the 22.

Seconds later, Basil's 39-yard field-goal attempt sailed outside the left upright, leaving the Buckeyes with their 23-21 lead at the 4:12 mark of the third period.

But somehow Ohio State maintained the momentum. After the defense forced Michigan to go three-and-out, the offense went back to work, setting up shop at its own 9-yard line. Hyde broke off a 14-yard run on

Continued On Page 12



## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

# Buckeyes Dominate Second Half Despite Mistakes

Continued From Page 11

the second play of the possession, and two plays later Miller broke over right end and up the home sideline for what appeared to be a 42-yard game-breaking bolt.

That put the ball at the U-M 29, but whatever momentum the Buckeyes were enjoying was interrupted by the end of the third quarter. Three plays into the fourth period, Miller fumbled while he was being sacked and Clark recovered for the Wolverines at his own 36.

Again, the OSU defense rose to the occasion and forced another three-and-out, stopping Smith for a loss of 2 yards on third-and-1 and forcing another punt. That was followed by another critical turnover by Michigan the next time the Wolverines got the ball when Gardner lost the handle on the football while being tackled by Bennett and junior defensive tackle Johnathan Hankins, and Howard recovered at the U-M 10-yard line.

But again the Ohio State offense couldn't cash in. Hyde gained 5 yards on first down, but he was stopped for no gain on second down and Miller was tripped up for a 3-yard loss on third down. That brought Basil into the game again, and the OSU kicker converted a 25-yard field goal to push the Buckeyes' lead to 26-21 with 6:26 left in the game.

Michigan returned the ensuing kickoff to the 31-yard line, and then Gardner converted a crucial third-and-10 with a 10-yard out pass to junior wideout Jeremy Gallon. The Michigan quarterback followed with a 9-yard scramble, but the gain was negated by a holding penalty to push the Wolverines back to their own 31.

Two plays later, Gardner outshot Dileo in the deep flat and the ball was picked off by Barnett with 4:50 left in the game.

That was all the Buckeyes needed to close things out. The Wolverines, who had already spent two of their second-half timeouts, needed to stop Ohio State in order to get the ball back, but they couldn't do it.

Despite another false-start penalty that backed them up to a first-and-15 at their own 47, the Buckeyes turned to Hyde. The junior tailback went over right guard for 3 yards

on first down, and then after Miller picked up 5 to set up a third-and-7, Hyde thundered through a hole created by offensive linemen Marcus Hall and Jack Mewhort for a 13-yard gain.

Hyde followed with carries of 6 and 5 yards for another first down as the clock wound under a minute and a half. After that, it was simply of a matter of three kneeldowns to preserve the 26-21 victory and the perfect season.

## Game Notes

- Ohio State and Michigan marked the 109th renewal of what is known simply as The Game. The teams first met in 1897 and have played one another every season since 1918. The Wolverines lead the overall series by a 58-45-6 margin, including a 27-25-2 advantage in Columbus. Ohio State actually has a home advantage in the series in games played at Ohio Stadium, however, where the Buckeyes are now 24-21-1 against Michigan. OSU was 1-6-1 vs. the Wolverines at old Ohio Field.

- The Buckeyes have won each of the last six games in the series played at Ohio Stadium, extending their longest home winning streak ever against the Wolverines.

- Ohio State has now beaten Michigan in 10 of the last 12 meetings in the series. That is an unprecedented period of success for the Buckeyes against their archrivals. Their previous best stretch was an 8-2 record against the Wolverines between 1955 and 1963.

- Meyer is in his first season with the Buckeyes with a career record of 116-23 in 11 seasons as a head coach. But the coach had never enjoyed much success against Michigan, including 0-1 against the Wolverines as a head coach. Meyer's Florida team was on the losing end of a 41-35 decision to U-M in the 2008 Capital One Bowl, and the coach had also faced Michigan six times as an assistant, posting a 2-4 record against the Wolverines. He had a 1-1 mark against U-M as an Ohio State assistant coach from 1986-87, was 0-1 at Colorado State from 1990-95 and was 1-2 at Notre Dame from 1996-2000.

- Meyer became only the fifth Ohio State head coach to enjoy a winning record against Michigan. The others are Woody Hayes (1951-78) at 16-11-1, Jim Tressel (2001-10) at 9-1, Earle Bruce (1979-87) at 5-4 and Francis A. Schmidt (1934-40) at 4-3. Hayes, Bruce and Schmidt are all members of the College Football Hall of Fame.

- Michigan head coach Brady Hoke is in his second season with the Wolverines. He now has a career record of 66-56 in 10 seasons as a head coach, including 19-6 at Michigan. Hoke is 1-1 against Ohio State as a head coach and 6-4 lifetime against the Buckeyes. He spent eight seasons from 1995-2002 on Lloyd Carr's coaching staff at U-M.

- Six Michigan head coaches have winning records against Ohio State. They are Fielding Yost (1901-23, '25-26) at 16-3-1, Bo Schembechler (1969-89) at 11-9-1, Herbert "Fritz" Crisler (1938-47) at 7-2-1, Gary Moeller (1990-94) at 3-1-1 and Gustave Ferbert (1897-99) and George Little (1924) at 1-0 each.

- Ohio State entered the game ranked No. 4 in the Associated Press writers' poll while Michigan was 19th in the BCS standings and 20th in the AP and USA Today coaches' polls. Meyer upped his career record to 24-10 against ranked teams, including 3-0 at Ohio State. Meanwhile, Hoke dropped to 4-10 for his career against ranked opponents, including a 3-4 mark at Michigan.

- The higher ranked team has now won each of the last eight meetings in the series. The last time the higher ranked team lost was in 2004 when unranked Ohio State toppled the seventh-ranked Wolverines by a 37-21 final.

- This marks the second year in a row neither the Wolverines nor the Buckeyes have won or shared the Big Ten championship. The last two-year stretch when neither team was involved in the league title was in 1994-95.

- The game featured two of the winningest college football teams in history. Michigan ranks first all-time with 903 wins while Ohio State is fifth with 849. Texas is second with 866, Notre Dame is third with 865 and Nebraska is fourth with 856.

- This year's contest marked the 19th time in series history that Ohio State and Michigan played one another after Thanksgiving. The teams have produced an even 9-9-1 split when the game has been played after Turkey Day.

- Since the two teams met in 1922 for the Ohio Stadium dedication game, a total of 7,963,573 fans have attended The Game. That's more than any other college football game in America. Sixty-three of those 91 games have been sold out, including the last 44 in a row.

- This year's attendance of 105,899 was the largest crowd ever to witness an OSU-Michigan game at Ohio Stadium. The crowd fell just short of the facility's record attendance, however. That was set during the 2009 night game against USC when 106,033 packed the Horseshoe.

- The Wolverines featured 24 native Ohioans on their roster including six starters – center Elliott Mealer (Wauseon), strong safety Jordan Kovacs (Oregon Clay), offensive guard Patrick Omahame (Columbus DeSales), Clark (Cleveland Glenview), Roundtree (Trotwood-Madison) and Ryan (Cleveland St. Ignatius). That number would have been seven had running back Fitzgerald Toussaint (Youngstown Liberty) not suffered a season-ending leg injury the week before against Iowa.

- The Buckeyes have two players from Michigan – senior right tackle Reid Fragel (Grosse Pointe South) and Hankins (Detroit Southeastern).

- In the previous 108 contests between OSU and Michigan, 40 were decided by seven points or fewer. In those 40 games, each team had 17 wins and there were six ties.

- Miller's 189 yards through the air against the Wolverines pushed his career passing yardage to 3,198 and past Todd Boeckman (3,085, 2005-08) into 11th place on Ohio State's all-time list. Currently occupying 10th position is Craig Krenzel (4,493, 2000-03).

- Miller increased his career rushing total to 1,986 yards, and he needs only 14 more to become the 24th player in Ohio State history to crack the 2,000-yard mark.

- Hyde tallied the fifth 100-yard game of his OSU career and increased his career rushing total to 1,677 yards, good for 32nd on the Buckeyes' all-time list.

- Brown's eight catches gave him 82 receptions for his career, and that moved him past several players and into 22nd place on the Ohio State's all-time list. Brown also has 979 career receiving yards, placing him just 42 yards shy of cracking the school's all-time top 25 in that category.

- Ohio State wore specially-designed Nike uniforms for the game. The uniforms featured enlarged jersey numbers and stripes as well as more utilization of the color black, including the name plates on the backs of the jerseys. Jerseys also featured seven Buckeye leaves along the back collar and a Block "O" on the front collar.

- Twenty-one Ohio State seniors made their final Ohio Stadium appearance on Senior Day. Getting their traditional hug from the head coach and high-five from Brutus were, in alphabetical order, Boren, Dalton Britt, Ben Buchanan, Zach Domicone, Fragel, Garrett Goebel, Adam Homan, Howard, Orhian Johnson, Storm Klein, William McCary, Ross Oltorik, Vincent Petrella, Taylor Rice, Etienne Sabino, Justin Siems, Simon, Stewart Smith, Kharim Stephens, Jake Stoneburner and Williams.

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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

## BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 26, Michigan 21

**Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on where the win rates in his career:** "I don't think it's fair for anybody to say 1A, 1B, 1C, but I can tell you that's as good as it gets."

**Michigan head coach Brady Hoke on the loss:** "It is hard to win when you turn the ball over four times and don't convert third-and-short opportunities. We played well enough to win at times but gave up too many 4- and 5-yard runs in the end."

**Sophomore quarterback Braxton Miller on capping the season with a win against Michigan:** "It's a perfect season. You can't ask for anything better. Going out 12-0, especially for the seniors that can't go to a bowl game ... I know they're grateful. Good luck to them at the next level."

**Fifth-year senior defensive lineman Nathan Williams on the team:** "At the beginning of the year, our goal was to win as many games as possible for the seniors. We had to win it not only for the seniors, we had to win for the state of Ohio, we had to win for Ohio State, we had to win for all the alumni that have been a part of this. It's been such a great year, and it would have been terrible to go out with a loss in your last game. I think we all knew we had to win this game to make our legacy known."

**Fifth-year senior linebacker Etienne Sabino on being undefeated:** "It still hasn't hit me. I keep thinking about it and I can't get over the fact we're 12-0. How many other teams can say that?"

**Meyer on the play of sophomore Michael Bennett and freshmen Adolphus Washington, Noah Spence and Tommy Schutt, who all pitched in to make up for the absence of injured senior standout John Simon:** "Those guys ... sometimes you recruit guys that are overrated. The names you just mentioned are not overrated. They're going to be great players here. They're going to be great players here and I appreciate the effort. On top of it, they're wonderful people."

**Fifth-year senior defensive back Orhian Johnson on what Simon told the team after the game:** "He said he was appreciative for all of the things we've done as a team and all the coaching staff for all they've done for us. He couldn't picture it any other way."

**Junior tailback Carlos Hyde on playing a**

**big role in a win over Michigan that capped a perfect season:** "That's exactly why I came to this school - to play in games like that, to play our rival in a big game in the 'Shoe with a perfect season. That's exactly why I came here - to go out on top like that."

**Johnson on the message for the defense at halftime:** "They really just wanted us to get ready, talk fundamentals right now and get back to what we know how to do. We gave up a couple of big plays (in the first half), but they weren't really hitting us out of too much of their base stuff. So we really just tried to settle down a little bit and get focused."

**Junior safety Christian Bryant on the difference for the OSU defense in the second half:** "We made adjustments in the locker room. The defensive coaches told us that we needed to stop No. 16 (U-M senior quarterback Denard Robinson) because we knew he wasn't going to throw the ball."

**Robinson on whether he could have thrown the ball:** "I can throw. We went with the plays Coach was calling and we thought would be successful. However, I do feel comfortable throwing the ball."

**Bryant on Robinson's 67-yard touchdown run late in the second quarter:** "It was a collision between me and Travis (Howard). He hit (Robinson) on the right side and I hit him on the left side. Travis and I actually collided and hit heads on that play, and (Howard) was shaken up afterwards. Those are plays we need to overcome like we did in the second half."

**Junior kicker Drew Basil on the pressure to make field goals in a tight game:** "I didn't feel any pressure. (Long snapper) George (Makridis), (holder) Kenny (Guiton) and the whole kicking unit did their jobs, which makes mine easier. It's a lot easier to make kicks when you have the best snapper and holder in America."

**Barnett on his fourth-quarter interception:** "It floated for a little bit, so I have to think the defensive line got good pressure. Orhian Johnson got a good reroute on a guy. ... It was a combined effort. It wasn't just me. I get the glory because I made the interception, but there was a lot more that went into it."

**Senior punter Ben Buchanan on the scene in the postgame locker room:** "There was a lot of love in that room. You could feel that there was a lot of love. A lot of the same things were echoed. This was a team that would refuse to lose, a team that truly loved one another and was excited to be around each other. That's very rare at the Division I college level when you have a special bond like that. I feel very privileged to be around that."

**Johnson on what he'll miss most:** "Definitely the university, but honestly it's going to be those guys in that locker room. I mean, for the stuff we went through, you have to be able to lean on some of those guys and somebody has to be able to pick you up when you fall down. Honestly, I could go from the bottom of the list to the top of the list and go out there and if I needed to, I could take a bullet for those guys. We went through everything together. They're like my brothers for real. Anytime they need me, they can call me for anything. I love them, the coaching staff as well and the managers and everyone. We've been through a lot, and it's really paid off."

**Senior fullback-turned-linebacker Zach Boren on the 2012 team being one of only six unbeaten teams in OSU history:** "That's awesome. It's kind of surreal. It was our goal all year to go out on the right foot, I guess, and to help lead this team for the following year and get the momentum after last season. I think we did that. Like I told the guys after the game in the locker room, I wish it was a pro team because we'd all be coming back next year and have another shot at it. But it's college so guys have to move on. This team is going to be tough to deal with for the next couple of years."

**Meyer on what the 12-0 season does for the future of his program:** "The whole theme this week was, 'Go where the air is rare.' The last door is a big one. Open it, kick it open, do what you have to get through that door. Once you're in there, it smells different, it tastes and looks different. I'm hoping the guys get that taste and they want to do it again because once you taste that, it tastes really good. The foundation, I think, is strong."

**Hyde looking ahead to next year:** "I'm ready to go right now. I'm ready to get back into off-season workouts and prepare for next season. I can't wait."

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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

# Beating U-M Culmination Of Offense's Growth

If statistics from last season weren't enough to reveal the entire story, Urban Meyer became quickly aware of Ohio State's offensive deficiencies after agreeing to lead the program 12 months ago.

A gander at the statistics from the Buckeyes' 26-21 win over Michigan on Nov. 24 would indicate the team still suffered from the same faults that plagued them last year – careless turnovers, ill-advised penalties and struggles converting touchdowns in opportunities in the red zone.

## INSIDE THE OFFENSE

Ari Wasserman

But as Meyer took the lectern to address the media following the win, he described a unit that has an emerging superstar at quarterback, proven playmakers at wide receiver, a jelled offensive line and now what the head coach considers to be one of the best running backs in all of college football.

It's been a long and sometimes tumultuous voyage during the past year for the offense, the starting point being last November when all the aforementioned entities were still major question marks.

Twelve wins and no losses later, the team's offensive progress over the course of the past year culminated in a unit that helped the Buckeyes achieve something that will never be forgotten at Ohio State – a perfect 2012 season.

"It was a journey," co-offensive coordinator Ed Warinner told BSB. "I don't think when we started that we envisioned it would end up this good."

"Everybody was very unselfish, everybody has bought in and we simply improved. Each week all season it was a different group that made a difference for us, but eventually we all came together to form what we are today."

That finished product was on full display when the Buckeyes took the field on the opening possession against the Wolverines



JOSH WINSLOW

**SCORING SIX – Junior Corey "Philly" Brown (10) scored one of only two Ohio State touchdowns against Michigan on a 14-yard reception in the second quarter, despite the best efforts of Michigan linebacker Desmond Morgan (48).**

and marched down the field in six plays to score a touchdown in only 2:19.

The drive had the full balance the offensive coaching staff envisioned when putting the unit together. It exhibited a mixture of tough runs by running back Carlos Hyde early in the drive and a big 52-yard strike from quarterback Braxton Miller to Devin Smith to get the team inside the Michigan 10.

Finally, Ohio State converted in the red zone when Hyde muscled his way into the end zone for the 3-yard touchdown run.

"We got off to the perfect start," wide receiver Corey "Philly" Brown said. "We did everything we had to do, and I think that kind of showed what we're capable of. It was just all the things we have worked all season to get good at coming together. It was a great way to get the game going."

Ohio State's first drive set the stage for the high-profile offensive shootout most

expected, especially because the Wolverines offense that's led by quarterback Denard Robinson has punished opposing defenses all season.

The Buckeyes, however, felt comfortable with their chances to go toe-to-toe with Michigan's high-flying offense. And they did.

OSU moved the ball consistently the entire game, particularly on the ground with the hard-nosed running of Hyde, as the team racked up 396 yards of total offense and 22 first downs.

The Buckeyes, however, managed to score only one more touchdown when Miller found Brown on a 14-yard pass to put OSU ahead 17-14 with 1:30 remaining in the first half.

Robinson, as he's been known to do all season, answered on Michigan's ensuing possession when he rushed 67 yards for the touchdown to put the Wolverines up four with 40 seconds left. Miller then led the Buckeyes on a quick 32-second scoring drive that was capped by a Drew Basil field goal as time expired in the first half to cut Michigan's advantage to one point at 21-20.

Two field goals were all Ohio State managed in the second half, but that was enough

for the Buckeyes to hold on to the close win because the team's defense didn't allow Michigan to score after the break.

"I think we did a lot of good things offensively and we were able to move the ball," senior offensive tackle Reid Fragel said. "We are thankful we got the win and our defense stepped up like it usually does, but I do think how far we have come this year could be seen in this game. We just didn't capitalize on all of the opportunities we probably should have."

Ohio State had multiple opportunities to score touchdowns and grab the much-needed momentum from the Wolverines early in the first half.

On the team's third drive of the game clinging to a 7-7 tie, the Buckeyes advanced to Michigan's 24-yard line on a 19-yard strike from Miller to Brown on an impressive conversion of a third-and-14.

Looking poised to score for the second time in its first three drives, Ohio State sputtered because of penalties. On first down, OSU committed a false start penalty and committed a holding infraction on the first attempt to run the play.

An additional false start later in the drive prevented the Buckeyes from gaining a first down, instead having to settle for a 41-yard field goal from Drew Basil, who converted on four of his five attempts against the Wolverines after having been needed for only four makes all season heading into the game.

"There were a lot of mistakes, but I think some of that is the moment, The Game, the undefeated season and some guys were maybe pressing a little bit and the intensity got the best of them a little bit," Warinner said. "We did a good job of moving the ball and weathering the storm, but we weren't as efficient as we wanted to be, especially in the red zone. We didn't score touchdowns every time down there, and that kept the game a little closer down the stretch."

Ohio State's inability to convert when driving deep into Michigan territory ultimately helped Michigan stay in the game. The Buckeyes drove inside the Wolverines' 20-yard line five times but managed to score a touchdown only twice.

Miller and the offense got some help out of the gate in the second half from the defense when the defenders stopped Michigan on downs near midfield. Down by one point at the time, OSU used six straight runs between Hyde and Miller to advance

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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

to the Wolverines' 15. A quarterback draw on 3rd-and-6 was sniffed out by Michigan two yards short of the first down, and Basil again knocked through a field goal to give the team the 23-21 lead with 8:12 remaining in the third quarter.

After another defensive stop – this time when the defense forced Robinson to fumble – Ohio State got the ball in great field position and threatened again.

Starting at Michigan's 37, the Buckeyes used a collection of runs and short routes to advance to the Wolverines' 4. Michigan again didn't allow the Buckeyes to reach the end zone when Miller was sacked for a loss of 6 and a snap sailed over the quarterback's head for another 12 negative yards before Basil missed a field-goal attempt to leave the Buckeyes without points despite the red-zone visit.

The woes continued again on Ohio State's next possession, though once again the Buckeyes did well in moving the football before coming away with nothing. After using six plays to move from its own 9-yard line to Michigan's 28 – including a 42-yard burst by Miller – OSU turned it over when Miller fumbled the ball after being sacked by Frank Clark. It wasn't a red-zone opportunity, but the team was in range to add more points.

Perhaps the squandered opportunity that hurt the most was when the Buckeyes forced U-M quarterback Devin Gardner to fumble at his own 10-yard line with 8:19 remaining in the game.

Clinging to a two-point lead late and only 10 yards away from extending the game to two scores – which would have all but ended Michigan's chances for the win – the Buckeyes managed only 5 yards on three rushing plays before resorting to another field goal.

"Those missed opportunities really hurt and it was kind of the theme for us in the game," Brown said. "It was bad because we moved the ball so well on them, but for some reason we just had trouble at times getting the ball into the end zone. That's not something that has hurt us at all this year, but it kind of did in this game."

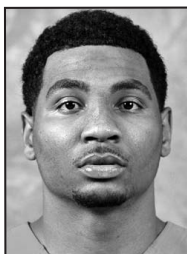
Though the misspent opportunities surfaced as a recurring theme against the

Wolverines, Warinner was quick to point out this was not the same Ohio State offense that was a large reason the Buckeyes lost seven games in 2011.

Miller finished the game completing 14 of 18 passes for 189 yards and a score to Brown, who finished the eight catches for 95 yards. Hyde once again stole the show on the ground, rushing for 146 yards and a touchdown in the win.

Those three made for quite the nucleus of players who emerged as reliable options to change games, something Meyer said was lacking multiple times before the commencement of his first regular season.

And those parts, Warinner said, are just a few pieces to the unit that the coach saw mesh in the Buckeyes' 17-16 win at Michigan State on Sept. 29 before continuing to gradually grow ever since.



Braxton Miller

"That's when we went from a group of really good athletes winning games to one team," Warinner said of the win over the Spartans. "That was the turning point of when we became one unit that worked functionally together."

So consider OSU's last win of the season a way of things coming full circle. Just as it did with the Spartans, the Buckeyes' offense took over late in the game holding a small lead with

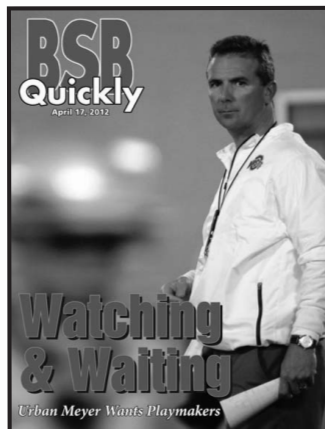
only two first downs separating them from the win.

The Buckeyes turned to Hyde, who went from just another name in the running backs room to one of the team's most proven players. Hyde rushed for 27 yards on five carries on Ohio State's final drive, enough to milk off the remaining time and send the Buckeyes to the victory.

"Power and tight zone was just working all game," said Hyde, who was admittedly flattered by Meyer's assessment that he's becoming one of the most exciting backs in the country. "We stuck to it and we were getting great success with that."

"Running out the clock meant a lot. It meant my coaches have a lot of trust in me at the end of games. It was just like the Michigan State game, where they gave me the ball at the end to seal the game. It was the same situation. They gave me the ball to get a first down to close the game. It felt great."

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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

## Adjustments Allow Buckeyes To Halt U-M

Going into the 109th version of The Game on Nov. 24 in Ohio Stadium, the Ohio State defensive staff knew it was going to face a challenge when it came to shutting down Michigan's offense.

Much of that stemmed from the fact the Wolverines were likely to use two quarterbacks in the game, a pair of dual-threat options in senior Denard Robinson and junior Devin Gardner who brought varied but impressive skill sets to the table.

## INSIDE THE DEFENSE

### Jeff Svoboda

Gardner entered having started three straight games, accounting for 13 touchdowns in that span while leading Michigan to 38.3 points per game. Robinson, one of the most elusive and lethal players in college football for the past three years, had returned from injury against Iowa one week prior to run for 98 yards out of the backfield.

Robinson didn't throw any passes against the Hawkeyes as he continued to rehab from an elbow injury suffered Oct. 27 at Nebraska, but the Buckeyes had no way of knowing going into the game whether Robinson's health would improve to the point he would be able to chuck the ball at all in Ohio Stadium.

"The tough thing is you didn't know exactly what his capacity was," defensive coordinator Luke Fickell said. "Is he a quarterback? Is he not a quarterback? Can he throw it? Last week was the first time we saw him in a game, so it caused us to have a lot of late nights.

"You're trying to anticipate what you'll get, what he can and can't do. They brought back a lot of things they did earlier in the year and even last year. They had two packages."

Playing off that mystery and diversity, the Wolverines attacked the Buckeyes with near impunity in the first half, piling up 219 total yards and taking a 21-20 lead into the locker room at the intermission.

But what led Michigan to such success in the first half ultimately led to the team's undoing. In the locker room, the Buckeyes knew that Robinson, who hadn't thrown a pass yet on a chilly and blustery day, wasn't likely to start tossing it around in the second half.

Thus set in a motion a series of adjustments both mental and physical that completely shut down the Wolverines in the final 30 minutes. Michigan ran only 21 plays in six second-half drives, totaling 60 yards and turning the ball over three times.

Most importantly, Robinson was limited to four rushes for minus-2 net yards and a lost fumble after breaking free for gains of 30 and 67 yards in the first half. The Buckeyes accomplished such impressive numbers by first making a switch in their defensive alignment, putting more focus on stopping Robinson on the edge and bringing extra defenders into the box when he was in the game.

"We made some adjustments on the perimeter run game," co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach Everett Withers said, mentioning moving the defensive front and putting more players on the edge to act as leverage back to the inside. "The kids understood. Hats off to those kids and hats

off to those seniors who helped us make adjustments."

The Buckeyes admitted after the game the task was made easier by the fact they believed after the first half that Robinson was not going to throw the ball. That allowed Ohio State to be more aggressive when it came to stopping Robinson before he got started.

"I think getting an extra guy in the box helped," safety C.J. Barnett said. "We didn't know if Denard could throw or not coming in with his injury. I thought in the second half we came out and we were playing two games, one against Gardner, one against Denard. When Gardner was in, you had to watch out for the pass. When Robinson was in, because of his injury, he really couldn't throw so we expected that run coming."

However, after the game, both Robinson and Michigan head coach Brady Hoke said that the senior was able to throw the ball even though he ended the game without attempting a pass. When asked if he thought that made his team predictable in the second half, Hoke had a simple answer.

"Not really, no," the coach said. Hoke preferred to point to execution as a reason his team struggled, but on the other side of the coin, the Buckeyes were able to excel thanks in large part to improving in that very area.

For example, while Ohio State was giving Michigan a potential numbers advantage to the edge on both of Robinson's long first-half runs, the Buckeyes were also victimized by mistakes at the point of attack.

When it came to Robinson's 30-yard run on Michigan's first play from scrimmage, both end Michael Bennett and Barnett had a chance to stop him behind or at the line of scrimmage, but the quarterback was able to elude them both before breaking down the right sideline.

On his 67-yard touchdown run with 40 seconds remaining in the first half, Robinson was hit at the same time by cornerback Travis Howard and safety Christian Bryant near the Michigan 45, but the two Buckeyes succeeded only in knocking each other off Robinson, who kept his balance and outraced the rest of the team to the end zone.

Schematics aside, those two plays showed that Ohio State simply needed to step up its tackling efforts to fix its issues. That was a focus of the team's halftime talk, and improved results followed in the second half.

"We knew we could fix it," Withers said. "It's when you don't have an idea of what's the problem that you worry. We've been a better tackling team throughout the latter part of the year. Just to come in there and talk about being a better tackling team, we did that in the second half. We talked about leveraging the football better in the second half and we did that. They were all fixable things."

Michigan also tried to run inside on the Buckeyes in the second half to no avail. The Wolverines had a pair of third-and-short plays – one in the third quarter and one in the fourth – that they tried to convert by lining up in the I-formation with two tight ends, but Thomas Rawls was stuffed for no gain on

the first and Vincent Smith lost 2 yards on the second.

Ohio State was excited to see the Wolverines try that tactic considering the physical nature of linebackers Zach Boren, Ryan Shazier and Etienne Sabino.

"We knew they couldn't run at us out of the I-formation," Bryant said. "(Defensive line coach Mike) Vrabel was telling us, 'Make them line up in the I-formation and try to run the ball against us,' because everybody on defense knew they couldn't do it."

To Shazier, Michigan's choice was a simple tactical error.

"The thing a lot of people, I think, didn't figure out is that we really like going against pro-set teams," he said. "Anyone who ran a pro set, we were really good at stopping the run."

With the running game kept in check by the Buckeyes in the second half, Michigan increasingly had to put the game in Gardner's hands with poor results. The junior was just 5 of 9 passing for 64 yards and an interception after the break.

Ohio State's cornerbacks, often left on an island in man coverage, were able to keep the passes in front of them in the second half. Jeremy Gallon caught a 30-yard post in front of Bradley Roby on a play-action pass, but the OSU corner was able to bring him down in open space, and that was the only long play the Wolverines were able to hit.

"We wanted to get a lot of pressure on him, and in order to do that, we had to play man on the outside," senior cornerback Travis Howard said of defending Gardner. "Our coaches knew that we were able to match up with their receiving corps. We had to do what was best for the defense to allow it to make plays and win the game."

## Turnover City

Howard alluded to pressure, and the Buckeyes' ability to get to Gardner in the pocket throughout the day was a major factor in the victory.

Not only did the Buckeyes sack the Wolverines' throwing quarterback four times, they were able to create three turnovers that were the direct result of the rush getting to Gardner.

The day before the game, Earle Bruce told the crowd at his "Beat Michigan Tailgate" that turnovers would be the difference in the game, and the former OSU coach was proved right.

"When you start playing in November, turnovers become big," Withers said. "Today we needed some. It felt like to win the game, we were going to have to win the turnover battle, and we did that today. That was huge."

The first blow was struck on Michigan's first drive, as true freshman Adolphus Washington was able to knock the ball out of Gardner's hand on a third-and-8 play at the Ohio State 22. Boren recovered the loose ball to bring a close to Michigan's opening attempt to put points on the board.

Both of Michigan's fourth-quarter turnovers were also the result of pressure. With Ohio State clinging to a 23-21 lead with less than 10 minutes to play, Michigan had the ball at its own 19 and tried a play-action pass.

Senior end Nathan Williams was in Gardner's face immediately, and though the Michigan QB was able to elude his grasp, Ohio State swarmed to the ball and a combined hit by Bennett and Johnathan Hankins forced the ball out. Howard fell on it after a prolonged scramble at the 10, setting up a field goal for the Buckeyes.

On Michigan's next drive, the team faced a second-and-20 at its own 31 when Williams and true freshman Noah Spence hit Gardner as he delivered a pass to Drew Dileo over the middle. The ball fluttered, sailing over Dileo's head and into the arms of Barnett near midfield. From there, Ohio State was able to run out the clock.

## Simon Out, Buckeyes Respond

With John Simon, an emotional leader on the defense in addition to the Big Ten's leader in sacks, unable to play in the game, there were legitimate questions about how Ohio State's defense would respond with the senior end unable to play in the game.

To Williams, those questions were answered on the first drive when Washington went around All-Big Ten left tackle Taylor Lewan and knocked the ball free from Gardner's grasp.

"Guys had to step up and fill the role for him," Williams said. "I think we all took a deep breath after the first series when Adolphus Washington had the sack. It was like, 'OK, we can do this with the guys we have.' That's a testament to our defensive line and Coach Vrabel getting guys prepared and ready."

Washington said he prepared as though he was going to be on the field a lot during the game, and he proved to be a fixture on obvious passing downs along with Spence.

"We were all nervous, but we knew everyone had to step up and play a little bit harder," said Washington, who was being coached by Simon on the sideline throughout the game. "I knew that I had to live up to his standard and go out there and play my hardest."

Still, coming up with such a huge play on his first-ever series in the Michigan game was a bit beyond the Cincinnati native's wildest dreams.

"I didn't know I'd play this much," he said. "The experience was crazy. I didn't really know what to expect going into the game, but just feeding off of the older guys' energy, it just builds you and gets you going and makes you just want to kill somebody, basically."

Bennett, a potential starter coming into the season whose sophomore campaign has been derailed by a groin injury suffered in camp, got the start with Simon out and also turned in a solid day, making a pair of tackles and helping set the edge.

To nearly a man, the Ohio State defenders said after the game they played with Simon's work ethic and relentless motor in their minds.

"It was a real tough situation seeing that John couldn't go out there being that he's the heart and soul of our defense," senior safety Orhian Johnson said. "For him to go out and not be able to play in this last game, it affected a lot of our seniors. We definitely wanted to go out there and play even harder just so we could get Johnny that game ball. We wanted to kind of display his character and attitude on the field."



Denard Robinson



Adolphus Washington

# Buckeye Game Analysis

## Play Of The Game

The biggest play of the game didn't put points on the board for Ohio State, but it did serve notice the second half of The Game on Nov. 24 was going to be much different from the first.

Michigan held a 21-20 lead as the teams went to their respective Ohio Stadium locker rooms, and the Wolverines had a chance to add to their lead when they received the opening kickoff of the second half.

U-M quickly earned a first down at its own 41, but Thomas Rawls was stuffed for no gain on a third-and-3 play at the 48, setting up fourth down. Michigan initially looked as though it were going to punt, but head coach Brady Hoke called a timeout and sent the offense – which had piled up 219 yards in the first half – back on the field with Denard Robinson at quarterback.

"We felt pretty good defensively," Hoke said. "We felt pretty good about the offense, to be honest with you. We say all the time we have to have each other's back."

But Michigan's confidence in its offense was undone thanks to Ohio State's halftime adjustments. The Buckeyes allowed Robinson to get to the edge on a pair of long first-half runs, but Ohio State was having none of it on this tone-setting fourth-down play.

Michigan jogged back on the field in a set with two tight ends and Robinson in the shotgun flanked by a pair of backs. Ohio State, comfortable in its knowledge Robinson was not going to throw the ball while limited by an elbow injury, put nine men in the box.

The Wolverines tried to run a similar power play that it used on each of Robinson's long runs in the opening half, but this one didn't get traction. Robinson followed senior right guard Patrick Omahneh of Columbus as well as fullback Stephen Hopkins to the left side, but Ohio State was ready.

First, senior strongside linebacker Etienne Sabino cut inside Hopkins at the point of attack, forcing Robinson inside and away from pulling guard Omahneh. From there, OSU linebacker Ryan Shazier broke inside All-Big Ten left tackle Taylor Lewan and was totally untouched as he stood up Robinson in the hole.

The Buckeye defense swarmed to the ball, stopping Robinson for a 2-yard loss. Not only did the excellent field position gained allow the Buckeyes to kick a field goal that gave them the lead for good, the stop showed the Ohio State defense wasn't going to be victimized in the second half as it had been in the first.

That was particularly true when it came to Robinson, who was held to minus-2 rushing yards after piling up 124 in the first half.

"They had a couple of lead blockers when he broke those big runs, so once we got the fits on those guys and were able to scrape off, we made the play so they weren't gaining any yards in the second half," OSU senior end Nathan Williams said.

## Hidden Play Of The Game

It's hard to call Ohio State's longest play of the day from scrimmage a hidden play, but a 52-yard pass from Braxton Miller to Devin Smith on the team's opening drive did set up what was an effective day throwing the football for the OSU sophomore – and allowed the Buckeyes to take an early lead.

Given the fact that Michigan entered the game with the top-ranked passing defense in the nation, and the late



JOSH WINSLOW

**UNTIL NEXT FALL – Ohio State quarterback Braxton Miller (5) capped his sophomore campaign with 189 yards on 14-of-18 passing and 57 rushing yards.**

November day dawned cold and blustery, indications did not point to Miller having a great day.

But with the Buckeyes holding a first-and-10 at their own 40 on the fourth play of the game, the offense decided to air it out. Miller faked a handoff to running back Rod Smith and then set up in the pocket.

He had Devin Smith racing down the right side of the field with inside position on Michigan's best cornerback, J.T. Floyd, and no safety in the picture. Miller aired the ball out and read the wind fairly well, as even though the ball hung up a little bit, Smith had plenty of room to slow down a beat and still pull in the ball at the 15.

The sophomore wideout got as far as the 8 before being pulled down by Floyd, and two plays later, Carlos Hyde went in from 3 yards out to give the Buckeyes an early lead.

## What Worked Well

- **Feeding the beast:** Hyde kept making the "feed me" hand motion that Michigan players, particularly Robinson, kept making during last year's U-M win, and who could blame him? The junior was a horse all game, finishing with 146 yards rushing and ending the game with his physical runs. Hyde ran for 861 yards and 14 touchdowns in eight Big Ten games.

- **Getting pressure on Devin Gardner:** The Michigan junior put up impressive throwing numbers in his first three starts, and the Wolverines entered the game leading the Big Ten in fewest sacks allowed. But even without star senior John Simon, Ohio State made four sacks and forced three turnovers that were the direct result of pressure on Gardner – all of which were key to the game.

- **The second-half defense:** The numbers were simply impressive. The Wolverines had only 60 yards on 21 plays after halftime and did not have a single snap in OSU territory. In addition, the Buckeyes held Michigan to four first downs while forcing three turnovers. In a word, it was dominance for a unit whose maturation was the key to the Buckeyes' finishing off an unbeaten season.

## What Didn't Work

- **Not finishing off the game:** Ohio State got into Michigan territory on all six of its second-half drives but scored only six points on a pair of Drew Basil field goals. The Buckeyes missed a field goal, lost a fumble and had to punt on three of those drives, with the other serving as the end of the game. A touchdown or two on any of those possessions would have moved the game out of reach of the Wolverines.

- **Playing mistake-free football:** The old coaching maxim that a team can't win a rivalry game while making errors wasn't true on this day. Ohio State was flagged for nine penalties, lost a pair of turnovers, missed a field goal and struggled on third down, but the Buckeyes' big plays and stalwart defense made up for those problems in the end.

## Reviewing The Matchups

**Ohio State rush offense vs. Michigan rush defense:** Ohio State kept the ball on the ground for much of the game, especially in the second half. The result was 207 net rushing yards and the type of legendary performance out of Hyde that won't be forgotten in the annals of The Game. **EDGE: Ohio State**

**Michigan rush offense vs. Ohio State rush defense:** Michigan couldn't run the ball unless it was with Robinson, as backs Rawls and Vincent Smith combined for 14 net yards on 10 rushes. With Robinson contained in the second half, Michigan finished with minus-4 net yards on the ground after halftime. Robinson's long touchdown run was key to Michigan's halftime lead, though. **EDGE: Even**

**Ohio State pass offense vs. Michigan pass defense:** The Buckeyes were effective throwing the ball when they tried to. Miller completed 14 of 18 passes for 189 yards and a score, and his ability to get to the ball to the outside helped the Ohio State offense flow in the first half. Michigan kept the Buckeyes to five attempts for 33 yards after the break. **EDGE: Even**

**Michigan pass offense vs. Ohio State pass defense:** The Wolverines hit a big play early in the game when they sent three receivers to the right side against two Buckeye defenders, springing Roy Roundtree for a 75-yard touchdown. Other than that, the OSU secondary was able to keep plays in front of it. Roundtree and Jeremy Gallon combined for nine catches for 159 yards, but the fact that the two had only nine grabs – and the fact that Michigan had 11 as a team – meant they didn't move the ball that much. **EDGE: Even**

**Special teams:** This one was split down the middle for Ohio State. After entering the game just 4 for 6 on field-goal tries this season, Basil finished 4 for 5 on the day, a solid performance that gave the Buckeyes the winning points. But Corey "Philly" Brown's lost fumble on a punt helped gift Michigan a touchdown in the first half, negating some of the good work in the kicking game. **EDGE: Even**

**Intangibles:** This is a hard category to grade. The Buckeyes outgained Michigan by a 396-279 margin and had 22 first downs to the Wolverines' 13, factors that usually point to a bigger win than the five-point victory the Buckeyes had. On the other hand, the team's refuse-to-lose mentality and tidal wave of emotion on a big day in Columbus helped push Ohio State over the top. For the final time this year, we'll give the Buckeyes the edge in that realm. **EDGE: Ohio State**

– Jeff Svoboda

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# The Numbers Game

## Ohio State 26, Michigan 21

Nov. 24, 2012 — Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
MICHIGAN	7	14	0	0	21
OHIO STATE	10	10	3	3	26

### First Quarter

**OSU** — Hyde, 3 yard run (Basil kick), 12:41; 6 plays, 75 yards, 2:19 TOP.

**U-M** — Roundtree, 75 yard pass from Gardner (Gibbons kick), 7:10; 3 plays, 83 yards, 1:02 TOP.

**OSU** — Basil, 41 yard field goal, 0:37; 11 plays, 47 yards, 6:26 TOP.

### Second Quarter

**U-M** — Gardner, 2 yard run (Gibbons kick), 10:42; 5 plays, 25 yards, 2:43 TOP.

**OSU** — P.Brown, 14 yard pass from B.Miller (Basil kick), 1:30; 6 plays, 59 yards, 2:22 TOP.

**U-M** — D.Robinson, 67 yard run (Gibbons kick), 0:40; 2 plays, 75 yards, 0:50 TOP.

**OSU** — Basil, 52 yard field goal, 0:00; 5 plays, 30 yards, 0:32 TOP.

### Third Quarter

**OSU** — Basil, 28 yard field goal, 8:12; 7 plays, 35 yards, 3:42 TOP.

### Fourth Quarter

**OSU** — Basil, 25 yard field goal, 6:26; 4 plays, 2 yards, 1:53 TOP.

**Att.** — 105,899.

**Weather** — 33 degrees, cloudy, flurries; wind, W 17 mph.

### Team Statistics

	U-M	OSU
First Downs	13	22
Rushing	5	13
Passing	5	9
Penalty	3	0
Rushes-Yards	27-108	52-207
Passing Yards	171	189
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	11-20-1	14-18-0
Offensive Plays	47	70
Total Net Yards	279	396
Third Down Efficiency	4-10	4-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	0-0
Punts-Avg.	4-47.8	3-44.3
Fumbles-Lost	3-3	3-2
Penalties	5-54	9-74
Time of Possession	23:10	36:50

### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.)** — **U-M:** D.Robinson 10-122; V.Smith 5-12; Rawls 5-2; Gardner 7-(-28). **OSU:** Hyde 26-146; B.Miller 20-57; P.Brown 1-21; R.Smith 1-4.

**PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD)** — **U-M:** Gardner 11-20-1-171-1. **OSU:** B.Miller 14-18-0-189-1.

**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.)** — **U-M:** Gallon 6-67; Roundtree 3-92; Kwiatkowski 1-6; Dileo 1-6. **OSU:** P.Brown 8-95; D.Smith 2-63; Stoneburner 1-9; Spencer 1-9; Hyde 1-8; M.Thomas 1-5.

**PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long)** — **U-M:** Hagerup 4-47.8-56. **OSU:** Buchanan 3-44.3-50.

**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — **U-M:** Gallon 1-(-1). **OSU:** P.Brown 4-30.

**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — **U-M:** Dileo 2-35; Norfleet 1-27. **OSU:** Roby 2-47.

**FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.)** — **U-M:** F.Clark 1-0; M.Robinson 1-0. **OSU:** Z.Boren 1-0; Howard 1-0; N.Williams 1-0.

**INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.)** — **U-M:** None. **OSU:** Barnett 1-1.

**SACKS (No.-Yds.)** — **U-M:** Black 1.0-18; Ryan 1.0-8; F.Clark 1.0-7; T.Gordon 1.0-6. **OSU:** Shazier 1.0-11; Z.Boren 1.0-9; A.Washington 1.0-8; Bennett 1.0-1.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.)** — **U-M:** Ryan 2.0-16; F.Clark 2.0-10; Black 1.0-18; T.Gordon 1.0-6; Campbell 0.5-1; Morgan 0.5-0. **OSU:** Shazier 2.5-14; Z.Boren 2.0-10; A.Washington 1.0-8; Bennett 1.0-1; Sabino 0.5-1.

**TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.)** — **U-M:** Morgan 5-6-11; Campbell 0-10-10; Ryan 6-3-9; Demens 4-5-9; T.Gordon 3-5-8; Kovacs 2-4-6; Taylor 3-2-5; Floyd 2-3-5; Q.Washington 1-4-5; F.Clark 3-1-4; Roh 1-3-4; Beyer 0-3-3; Simmons 1-1-2; Hawthorne 0-2-2; Avery 1-0-1; Jackson 1-0-1; Black 1-0-1; Jenkins-Stone 0-1-1; Ash 0-1-1. **OSU:** Z.Boren 3-6-9; Roby 7-1-8; Shazier 2-3-5; Barnett 2-3-5; Christian Bryant 3-1-4; Hankins 0-3-3; Howard 2-0-2; Griffin 1-1-2; Bennett 1-1-2; Sabino 0-2-2; Goebel 0-2-2; A.Washington 1-0-1; O.Johnson 1-0-1; Domicone 0-1-1; N.Williams 0-1-1; Perry 0-1-1.

**PLAYERS IN THE GAME** — **MICHIGAN:** Offense, Roundtree, Lewan, Barnum, Mealer, Omameh, Schofield, D.Robinson, Gallon, Hopkins, Rawls, V.Smith, Gibbons. Defense, Beyer, Campbell, Magnuson, Roh, Ryan, Demens, Morgan, Taylor, Kovacs, T.Gordon, Floyd, Hagerup. Reserves, M.Robinson, C.Gordon, Avery, Hawthorne, Dileo, Gardner, Furman, Ross III, Jackson, Funchess, J.Wilson, Simmons, Norfleet, M.Jones, Gyarmati, Bolden, Kerridge, Houma, Wile, Jenkins-Stone, Ash, Glanda, Black, Burzynski, Pipkins, F.Clark, Q.Washington, Kwiatkowski, Darboh, A.J.Williams, Reynolds, Heitzman. **OHIO STATE:** Offense, Mewhort, Norwell, Linsley, M.Hall, Fragel, Heuerman, Stoneburner, B.Miller, Hyde, D.Smith, P.Brown, Basil. Defense, N.Williams, Hankins, Goebel, Bennett, Shazier, Z.Boren, Roby, Christian Bryant, O.Johnson, Barnett, Howard, Buchanan. Reserves, R.Smith, C.Brown, C.Williams, Sabino, Spencer, Spence, Griffin, D.Grant, Guiton, Domicone, Reeves, Tanner, Rice, Marcus, Perry, Roberts, Homan, Makridis, Farris, S.Smith, Decker, Kramer, C.Carter, Underwood, Baldwin, Vannett, M.Thomas, Schutt, A.Washington.

## Season Statistics

2012 Game-By-Game					
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd		
Sept. 1	(18) MIAMI (OHIO)	W, 56-10	105,036		
Sept. 8	(14) C. FLORIDA	W, 31-16	104,745		
Sept. 15	(12) CALIFORNIA	W, 35-28	105,232		
Sept. 22	(16) UAB	W, 29-15	105,019		
Sept. 29	(14) at Mich. State (20)	W, 17-16	76,705		
Oct. 6	(12) NEBRASKA (21)	W, 63-38	106,102		
Oct. 13	(8) at Indiana	W, 52-49	48,880		
Oct. 20	(7) PURDUE	W, 29-22 (OT)	105,290		
Oct. 27	(9) at Penn State	W, 35-23	107,818		
Nov. 3	(6) ILLINOIS	W, 52-22	105,311		
Nov. 17	(6) at Wisconsin	W, 21-14 (OT)	80,112		
Nov. 24	(4) MICHIGAN (20)	W, 26-21	105,899		

\* OSU's gameday AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

### Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	257	219
Rushing	156	67
Passing	86	122
Penalty	15	30
Average Per Game/Rush	242.2	116.1
Average Per Game/Pass	181.5	243.5
Total Offense	5,085	4,315
Total Plays	837	849
Average Per Game	423.8	359.6
Average Per Play	6.1	5.1
Penalties-Yards	84-774	68-621
Fumbles-Lost	19-11	15-7
3rd Down Efficiency	67-158	63-191
Percentage	42%	33%
4th Down Efficiency	7-9	10-23
Percentage	78%	43%
Sacks-Yards	30-259	30-190
Times Of Possession Avg.	30:07	29:53

### Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	75	149	104	104	14	446	37.2
Opponents	69	58	68	79	0	274	22.8

### Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Braxton Miller	227	1,271	5.6	13	72
Carlos Hyde	185	970	5.2	16	29
Jordan Hall	40	218	5.4	1	15
Rod Smith	32	215	6.7	2	33
Br'onte Dunn	25	133	5.3	2	13
Philly Brown	11	96	8.7	1	21
Zach Boren	11	33	3.0	2	8
Kenny Guiton	9	32	3.6	0	23
Ben Buchanan	1	6	6.0	0	6
Devin Smith	1	2	2.0	0	2
Nick Vannett	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
TEAM	16	-68	-4.2	0	0
OSU Totals	559	2,907	5.2	37	72
OPP Totals	392	1,393	3.6	14	81

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
Braxton Miller	148	254	58.3	2,039	15-6	140.46
Kenny Guiton	13	23	56.5	139	2-1	127.29
TEAM	0	1	0.0	0	0-0	0.00
OSU Totals	161	278	57.9	2,178	17-7	138.87
OPP Totals	267	457	58.4	2,922	15-14	116.84

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Philly Brown	60	669	11.1	3	38
Devin Smith	30	618	20.6	6	72
Jake Stoneburner	16	269	16.8	4	72
Evan Spencer	12	136	11.3	0	44
Nick Vannett	9	123	13.7	0	32
Jeff Heuerman	8	94	11.8	1	35
Carlos Hyde	8	51	6.4	1	14
Zach Boren	5	42	8.4	0	14
Chris Fields	4	55	13.8	1	35
Jordan Hall	3	31	10.3	0	14
Michael Thomas	3	22	7.3	0	11
Rod Smith	2	55	27.5	1	51
Verlon Reed	1	13	13.0	0	13
OSU Totals	161	2,178	13.5	17	72
OPP Totals	267	2,922	10.9	15	83

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Carlos Hyde	17	—	—	—	—	102
Braxton Miller	13	—	2-2	—	—	82

Drew Basil	—	56-57	—	—	8-11	80
Philly Brown	6	—	—	—	—	36
Devin Smith	6	—	—	—	—	36
Jake Stoneburner	4	—	—	—	—	24
Bradley Roby	3	—	—	—	—	18
Rod Smith	3	—	—	—	—	18
Zach Boren	2	—	—	—	—	12
Br'onte Dunn	2	—	—	—	—	12
Jeff Heuerman	1	—	—	1	—	8
Chris Fields	1	—	—	—	—	6
Jordan Hall	1	—	—	—	—	6
Ryan Shazier	1	—	—	—	—	6
OSU Totals	60	56-57	2-2	1	8-11	446
OPP Totals	33	26-29	2-3	1	14-23	274

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Drew Basil	4-4	2-4	1-1	1-2	8-11
OSU Totals	4-4	2-4	1-1	1-2	8-11
OPP Totals	6-7	2-3	3-8	3-5	14-23

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Ben Buchanan	59	2,421	41.0	1	55
TEAM	3	0	0.0	2	0
OSU Totals	62	2,421	39.0	3	55
OPP Totals	68	2,754	40.5	2	70

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Travis Howard	4	51	12.8	0	25
Bradley Roby	2	49	24.5	1	41
Orhian Johnson	2	6	3.0	0	3
C.J. Barnett	2	1	0.5	0	1
Christian Bryant	1	38	38.0	0	38
Ryan Shazier	1	17	17.0	1	17
Etienne Sabino	1	2	2.0	0	2
Doran Grant	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	14	164	11.7	2	41
OPP Totals	7	6	0.9	0	3

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Philly Brown	18	221	12.3	2	76
Devin Smith	4	15	3.8	0	16
Chris Fields	2	14	7.0	0	9
Travis Howard	1	13	13.0	0	13
Bradley Roby	1	11	11.0	0	0
Jordan Hall	1	6	6.0	0	0
OSU Totals	27	280	10.4	3	76
OPP Totals	20	128	6.4	2	43

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Rod Smith	13	303	23.3	0	36
Devin Smith	8	147	18.4	0	26
Bradley Roby	3	61	20.3	0	26
Armani Reeves	2	45	22.5	0	26
Br'onte Dunn	1	22	22.0	0	22
Philly Brown	1	0	0.0	0	0
Jeff Heuerman	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	29	578	19.9	0	36
OPP Totals	57	1,184	20.8	1	100

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Ryan Shazier	70	45	115	17.0-78	5.0-47
Christian Bryant	36	35	71	0.5-1	—
Bradley Roby	41	22	63	2.0-13	1.0-11
C.J. Barnett	34	22	56	2.5-4	—
Johnathan Hankins	23	32	55	4.0-22	1.0-10
Zach Boren	24	26	50	3.5-15	1.0-9
Etienne Sabino	24	21	45	3.5-20	2.0-17
John Simon	22	23	45	14.5-87	9.0-73
Garrett Goebel	17	25	42	4.0-11	1.0-3
Travis Howard	26	14	40	—	—
Nathan Williams	19	21	40	3.5-14	2.0-11
Orhian Johnson	19	20	39	0.5-2	—
Doran Grant	15	4	19	1.0-8	1.0-8
Storm Klein	8	10	18	1.0-12	1.0-12
Corey Brown	7	10	17	—	—
Adam Griffin	8	5	13	—	—
Noah Spence	7	5	12	1.0-20	1.0-20
Michael Bennett	6	5	11	1.0-1	1.0-1
Adolphus Washington	5	4	9	3.5-29	3.0-27
OSU Totals	466	380	846	64-347	30-259
OPP Totals	471	394	865	68-294	30-190

**Fumbles Forced:** 2 — Ryan Shazier. 2 — Christian Bryant. 1 — Michael Bennett, Zach Boren, Etienne Sabino, John Simon, Adolphus Washington, Nathan Williams.

**Fumbles Recovered:** 1 — Michael Bennett, Zach Boren, Christian Bryant, Doran Grant, Travis Howard, Bradley Roby, Nathan Williams.

# Great Weather, Great Ending For 2012 Buckeyes

I woke up the morning of Nov. 24 to snow flurries and cold temperatures for what seemed like the first time since January. It was Ohio State-Michigan weather, and I just had a good feeling about The Game.

I don't know why the traditional weather gave me an inkling of a Buckeye victory over their archrivals and the finishing touches to a 12-0 season – both teams were going to play in the traditional season-ending weather – but the nip in the air did just that.

The teams played a somewhat untraditional Ohio State-Michigan first half, with big plays by both offenses dominating the proceedings. The Wolverines scored touchdowns on plays of 75 and 67 yards, and the Buckeyes set up a TD with a 52-yard pass from Braxton Miller to Devin Smith as the teams combined for 41 points in the first 30 minutes and Michigan took a 21-20 lead to the locker room.

To put that into Ohio State-Michigan perspective, during the legendary "Ten-Year War" from 1969-1978, the schools averaged 24.3 points combined *per game*. Each squad scored a total of 20 or more for the entire 60 minutes just twice, and those totals were good enough for wins – Ohio State by 20-9 in 1970 and 21-14 in 1975, and Michigan by a 24-12 count in Bo Schembechler's famous first effort in the rivalry in '69 and 22-0 in 1976, the first of three straight Wolverine victories that – along with one punch – helped end Woody Hayes' coaching career.

In the second half of this year's edition, the game took a decided turn toward its roots as the Buckeye defense – guilty of the type of missed tackles that had plagued it during the early going this season – stepped it up a notch and the scoring was limited to two field goals, both by Ohio State as the Buckeyes capped the perfect season with a 26-21 victory.

What did the Silver Bullets do in the final 30 minutes?

They held the Wolverines to minus-4 yards on 12 rushing attempts, 64 yards on 5-for-9 passing with a game-clinching interception and only four first downs. The Buckeyes also held Michigan, which had entered the game eighth in the nation in third-down conversions at 52.1 percent, to just one first down on four attempts and also stopped U-M on a key fourth-down play. Additionally, the Buckeyes forced a pair of fumbles to total three turnovers for the half and limited Michigan to just 10:29 of possession after the intermission.

Woody would have been proud.

Not that the Michigan defense didn't also play well after the break, limiting the Buckeyes to just the two field goals and 156 total yards.

But the Wolverines got another dose of the old-time Ohio State-Michigan rivalry as bruising tailback Carlos Hyde started pounding them, gaining 80 of his 146 rushing yards on 15 carries after the half, including 35 on nine carries in the final quarter to help the Buckeyes hold the ball for 10:29 of the final 15 minutes.

Heck, I would have given Hyde the ball even more. He definitely gets stronger as the game goes on, and even though his high total for carries this season was 28 against Nebraska, the 6-0, 232-pounder would have had several months to rest with the Buckeyes banned from postseason play had head coach Urban Meyer and his staff decided to pound him 30 or 40 times.

I know that Meyer and Co. are trying to bring a more wide-open offense to the stodgy Big Ten, but sometimes, when the game-time temperature is 33 degrees and you are playing in the most storied – and physical – rivalry of them all, smash-mouth football is still the way to go, just as it was under Woody and Bo.

## THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

Straying too far from Hyde almost cost the Buckeyes their perfect season against Wisconsin in week 11, and the Michigan game marked the second week in a row that Hyde was having more consistent running success than quarterback Braxton Miller, who – despite a 42-yard run on the final play of the third quarter – wound up with just 57 net yards on 20 carries after 39 yards in sacks were subtracted.

Miller did have a solid passing day, completing 14 of 18 for 189 yards, including the early 52-yarder to Smith, but the Wolverines were never able to consistently stop Hyde.

When the Buckeyes had the ball with second-and-1 on the Michigan 4-yard line midway through the third quarter, I would have done what Woody or Bo would have done and pounded Hyde for the first down and then the touchdown.

Instead, Miller dropped back to pass and was sacked for a loss of 6 yards. Then on third down, center Corey Linsley snapped the ball over Miller's head – what's with all those bad snaps lately? – for a loss of another 12 yards. So instead of a potential touchdown, the Buckeyes got a missed 39-yard field goal from Drew Basil.

Running backs on a roll and their offensive lines tend to get in a rhythm, and when they get in that rhythm a team can really wear down an opposing defense, both physically and mentally.

Chris "Beanie" Wells – built similarly to Hyde at 6-1 and 235 pounds – carried the ball against Michigan 39 times for 222 yards in 2007, and the Buckeyes limited the Wolverines to just 22:10 of possession time during a 14-3 OSU victory that year, another game that was played in winterlike conditions. I would have liked to see what Hyde and his Buckeyes might have done with that many carries. Meyer's promised wide-open offense is great, but there is nothing wrong with winning the old-fashioned way in The Game.

But in the end, this year's victory was really about the defense. The unit and its coordinator Luke Fickell took their licks for weeks early in the season, so let's give Fickell, the defensive staff and the players their props now.

I know Woody and Bo would have appreciated their efforts.

### Just Enjoy It

Amid all the assumptions and accusations about what might have happened had Ohio State elected not to take its 6-6 team to the Gator Bowl last season, there is a group of fans who seem unable to sit back and enjoy what a remarkable season this has been.

Personally, I have always been one who says you play the hand you are dealt. And everyone knew going in that when it came to the postseason, the Buckeyes had been dealt jokers. You make the best of it, and this year's Ohio State football team did just that. It achieved everything it was allowed to achieve, and just like the team that went all the way to the pinnacle of college football 10 years ago, this year's team did it in an exciting, entertaining, team-oriented way that made all of us proud.

Maybe those who can't get past the Buckeyes' postseason ban should note that Meyer seems to take the same attitude as I do.

"I'm not going to get into the what-ifs," he said after his team polished off Michigan to complete the perfect season. "You can't control what you can't control."

And there are plenty of "what-ifs."

What if the Buckeyes, a 6-7 club in 2011, lost a couple of games this season as they adapted to the Meyer system? Would anyone care that they couldn't go to the Big Ten Championship Game or a bowl game?

What if there were no ban? Would the team have crumpled under the pressure of the march to the national championship game? Were they able to remain loose because they were playing for pride and each other rather than playing under the glare of the national spotlight?

What if the Buckeyes could and did advance? Does a team that has had numerous weaknesses exposed over the course of the season have what it takes to beat Nebraska a second time and then compete with Alabama, Georgia or Notre Dame?

Maybe. Maybe not.

I know this much. After watching this team all season – and after seeing the Buckeyes defeat the invincible Miami Hurricanes in 2002 – if they had been able to make it to the national championship game, I would have been the last one to bet against them.

### This And That

- Going into the season, I would have figured the Buckeyes to go 9-3 or 10-2 given where they were last season, and I would have been thrilled had they reached either of those marks, confident that even better things were on the horizon.

I was stunned when I went back and checked our preseason reader poll and found that 19.4 percent of you predicted a 12-0 season. I guess many of you believed in Meyer's magic before he actually had a chance to work it in Columbus. The highest percentage of readers (38.1) saw the Buckeyes winning 10 games, 35.8 percent predicted 11 wins, 5.9 percent saw nine victories and less than 1 percent predicted eight wins or fewer.

- One of the Buckeyes with whom I have been somewhat disappointed this season has been punter Ben Buchanan. He was just 60th in the country with a 40.9-yard average, helping leave the Buckeyes a lowly 83rd in net punting at 35.8. He also has had three punts blocked.

But as a senior should against Michigan, the Westerville, Ohio, native rose to the occasion in his final appearance in The Game. Buchanan averaged 44.3 yards on three punts, dropping two inside the 20 including a key fourth-quarter punt that left Michigan at its own 8 at a time when field position was crucial.

Interestingly, the only punt that Buchanan did not drop inside the 20 – his longest at 50 yards and the only punt that the Wolverines returned – also resulted in Michigan starting deep in its own territory when a penalty on the return pushed U-M back to its own 17.

- Speaking of kickers, lost among the many big plays during the victory was the 52-yard field goal by Basil just before the half to close the Michigan margin to 21-20.

Michigan had just stolen the momentum with Denard Robinson's electrifying 67-yard touchdown run to answer a Buckeye scoring

drive and give the Wolverines the 21-17 lead with just 40 seconds remaining in the half and Michigan set to get the ball to start the final 30 minutes.

Basil's career-long boot tempered that momentum, and the Buckeyes rolled from there.

While Basil was seldom-used this season, it would have been foolish to think that a field-goal kicker would not play a big part in an OSU-Michigan game, and Basil doubled his output of the season with four three-pointers in the contest, including the only points in the second half.

### What's The Big Deal?

I keep hearing how the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry is ramping back up again now that Meyer is at OSU and Hoke is in Ann Arbor. Many are predicting another Ten-Year War.

Am I missing something? What exactly has Hoke done to merit all the excitement?

There is no question that the Wolverines had a big season in his first year as their mentor, but the program clearly took a step backward this year with an 8-4 record and a loss to each of the really good teams – Alabama, Notre Dame, Nebraska and Ohio State – it played.

You define yourself and your team by beating some of those squads, and Michigan defined itself this year as a middle-of-the-pack team by losing those games and almost losing several others.

As noted in a story on page 29 of this issue, Hoke is making inroads in recruiting, especially in Ohio. But the quickest way for Ohio State to quell those inroads is to keep beating the Wolverines. Michigan is now 2-10 in the last dozen editions of The Game, and Hoke's win in 2011 was over a dysfunctional Buckeye squad and even that Ohio State team was within a late missed Miller pass of winning.

By the way, what was the statement Hoke was trying to make by coming out in a short-sleeved shirt in late November? Was he emulating Woody Hayes? I noticed in some of the vintage OSU-Michigan footage that was aired this past week that even Hayes took to wearing a jacket during The Game.

The problem with making whatever silly statement Hoke was trying to make is that you look even sillier if you come out in the second half with a jacket on. So instead, you suffer.

Give a special nod of thanks, also, to Hoke's predecessor, Rich Rodriguez. If Rodriguez hadn't alienated the Boren family – a family as steeped in the Michigan tradition as any – the Buckeyes might never have landed Zach Boren, who couldn't have been moved to linebacker from fullback, which might have derailed the perfect 2012 season.

Thanks, Rich.

### Last Weekly Issue

This is the last weekly print issue of BSB for the 2012 football season. The next print issue of BSB is scheduled to be mailed Dec. 13. There will, however, be an electronic issue Dec. 4 with all the latest OSU sports news, including basketball coverage and updates on football recruiting.

Our continuing celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Buckeyes' 2002 national football championship will also continue with additional stories on Ohio State's big win over Michigan that season. (See also pages 22-25 of this issue.)

If you are a paid BSB print subscriber who has not already signed up to enjoy our 36 additional electronic issues, they are free with your print subscription just by signing up. See the instructions on page 5.