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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

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Momentum Maintained

Buckeyes Thump Rutgers, Remain Hungry For More

By **BLAKE WILLIAMS**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Rutgers' first game against Ohio State was one it would soon like to forget.

For the Buckeyes it was one to remember. Not to be remembered for the positives – and there were many – but to be recalled for the few blemishes the Buckeyes had and serve as a continued reminder of how they can get better. How they can stay hungry.

The Buckeyes topped the Big Ten newcomers 56-17, a start-to-finish demolition of the Scarlet Knights on Oct. 18. Ohio State amassed 585 yards, a balanced attack that yielded 261 yards in the air and 324 on the ground. The Buckeyes notched 31 first downs and cleared 50 points for the fourth straight game. The first-team offense didn't turn the ball over, and the Rutgers pass rush, their strongest unit entering the game, was held at bay as Ohio State surrendered no sacks. Essentially whatever the Buckeyes wanted to do offensively, they did.

The defense did its part to dominate, too, holding the Scarlet Knights more than 10 points below their average and creating three turnovers. Defensive back Eli Apple was able to get the defense on the scoreboard, scooping up a fumble and returning it 4 yards for a touchdown in the second quarter. The defense allowed only seven first-half points and equaled its season high with four sacks.

The offense and defense were so collectively dominant that special teams were hardly needed for the Buckeyes, but that unit excelled as well. Cameron Johnston's one punt traveled 53 yards and was downed inside the 20 while the kick coverage unit held Janarion Grant to less than 20 yards per return. Rutgers' average starting field position was its own 22.

Good Enough?

On the surface it appeared Ohio State could do no wrong, but despite the complete deconstruction of what had been a 5-1 team, the Buckeyes' focus was on what could have been done better.

"I was talking to some guys down there and we just beat this team pretty badly and then it almost felt like a loss," linebacker Darron Lee said. "That just shows the hunger that we had. It shows



JOSH WINSLOW

BRINGING IT IN – Ohio State senior wide receiver Evan Spencer (6) made a one-handed, highlight-reel-worthy touchdown catch during the Buckeyes' 56-17 win against Rutgers on Oct. 18 at Ohio Stadium.

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OHIO STATE VS. RUTGERS

Buckeyes Pour It On Early Against Rutgers

For 13 days, Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer waited.

His team was coming off back-to-back demolitions of Cincinnati and Maryland, with both beat-downs fueled by fast starts. The team's first open week of 2014 also came after a blowout against Kent State, but that one was a welcome sight for a young team in need of practice reps. Two weeks later, Meyer wasn't thrilled at the prospect of another free weekend.

GAME NOTEBOOK

Ryan Ginn

"I talked to our team today about it," Meyer said after practice on Oct. 15. "I don't normally say good things about our staff because they're expected to do the right thing, but for whatever reason in the last three games, they've jumped out early. Coming out of the locker room ready to play sets the tempo for the rest of the game."

"We started getting that reputation last year, and obviously early this year we didn't have it in the first few games. That's going to be a huge emphasis again this week."

In his postgame press conference three days later, he mentioned once again that his biggest concern in the game was the ability to get off to a fast start. This time he said it with a smile, as the Buckeyes rolled early en route to a 56-17 victory over Rutgers. Ohio State started off with an easy touchdown on its first possession, and by the time senior running back Rod Smith plowed into the end zone with nearly five minutes until halftime to give OSU a 35-7 lead, the outcome had already been pretty much decided.

In between those points, the Buckeyes cruised behind a dominant offense. The first three OSU drives all resulted in touchdowns. Excluding the 12-second drive that ended the first half, seven of the first eight drives by the Ohio State offense finished with a celebration in the end zone. The only punt game early in the second quarter, and sophomore punter Cameron Johnston uncorked a



JOSH WINSLOW

FAST START – Sophomore tailback Ezekiel Elliott (15) rushed for a 1-yard touchdown in the first quarter, helping the Buckeyes build a 35-7 halftime lead.

53-yard punt that pinned Rutgers deep in its own territory. Even a punt indirectly led to an OSU touchdown, as senior defensive end Rashad Frazier forced a fumble on the next play and redshirt freshman cornerback Eli Apple returned it for a touchdown.

The offensive numbers for the first half were impressive – 32 plays for 247 yards, four touchdowns and no turnovers. That the defense pitched in with a score of its own was an added bonus.

"It was really important for us to start fast as an offense, and I'm pleased we did that," offensive coordinator Tom Herman said. "We challenged them. We understood what it was going to take, and had we gone out and punted the first few possessions, who knows how different this game might have been, but our guys responded to the challenge and we're going to need to continue to do that."

There's no question that the performance resembled the early avalanches of a year ago, when Ohio State outscored its opponents by a combined 398-163 margin in the first half. After being outscored 28-13 in the first two quarters of games against Navy and Virginia Tech, the Buckeyes have trounced their next four foes by a 141-38 margin in the first half. It's no coincidence that in those four games, the Buckeyes

have scored a touchdown on their first drive every single time.

An improved defense has also shown it can hold its own, making it next-to-impossible for teams to crawl out of the holes they've been digging against Meyer's men.

"That's usually our goal, to start off fast," redshirt freshman "H" Jalin Marshall said. "When we start fast, it's hard for the other team to catch up. That helped us."

Defense Scores Again

For the second time in as many games and the third time this season, the Ohio State defense scored a touchdown. It was also the third game in a row that the defense put points on the board, having recorded a safety against Cincinnati.

The latest highlight was a team effort, with Frazier and Apple teaming up for the score.

"That's what we call team defense," defensive coordinator Luke Fickell said. "We stress it, we talk about it. We want to take the names off the back of the jersey and focus on the name on the front. When we do those things good things happen."

That point was illustrated across the room, where redshirt freshman linebacker and birthday boy Darron Lee – who had scored on a fumble return against Navy

– was doling out praise to Apple for reaching the end zone against his home-state team.

"It feels good for Eli to get in there," Lee, who stood Janarion Grant up for Frazier's hit, said. "It was just everybody reacting to the ball, doing your job. I just did my job, going out there and playing the bubble. Forcing turnovers, that's what we do, that's what we try to do – at least getting a take-away. And then getting points off it is huge. We're just going to keep continuing to build on that and get better at it."

The ability to force turnovers and potentially get points out of those interceptions and fumbles is even more important in the age of offense. With teams moving the ball more easily than ever, coming away with nothing – or even losing ground by giving up a score on offense – is an even stiffer price to pay.

"The way the game is played now there are going to be yards to be had," Fickell said. "There's a couple things you've got to be able to do. You've got to create turnovers, you've got to make plays in those situations, whether you can take them back for touchdowns or not, and then you have to make red-zone stops. That's the thing that we've got to reflect upon in this game. We'll harp on and fix up some of the running things that we have to do, but you got three more turnovers, you got a score and you got a big red-zone stop down there right before half. Those are all things we are going to feed off and build off of after this week and hopefully in the future, too."

His players are certainly feeding off the turnovers.

"It makes us want more," Lee said. "I think that number's going to increase in the next couple weeks. Our execution is getting a lot better each week. I think everybody sees that, our defense sees that, but we still have a lot of work to do to have domination on defense. That's what we're trying to get to."

Junior outside linebacker Joshua Perry echoed those statements, saying it wasn't enough that the defense has accounted for a score in four out of six games.

"We need one of those every game," Perry said. "That's one of those things that's big momentum, takes a little pressure off the offense and gives us something to work for."

Tight Ends Sighting

It's been a common complaint during the Meyer era that the tight ends haven't been utilized with the frequency that some fans desire.

Herman does not care about those complaints – and neither does tight ends coach Tim Hinton, who has said repeatedly that the offense is simply designed to take what's there – but his offense produced results at the position against the Scarlet Knights.

Senior Jeff Heuerman caught one pass for 16 yards, but it was junior Nick Vannett who was the attention grabber, nabbing a pair of touchdown catches for a combined 38 yards. Interestingly enough, Vannett, who serves as Heuerman's backup when the Buckeyes aren't in two-tight end sets, wasn't even supposed to be on the field for his 12-yard touchdown catch on the first drive of the game.

"The thing that was crazy, Jeff was supposed to be in," redshirt freshman quarterback J.T. Barrett said. "Just certain things happened and Jeff came out, one time he took himself out, took away a touchdown for

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OHIO STATE VS. RUTGERS

2014 OSU Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result	TV	Record, Oct. 16-18 Results
Aug. 30	vs. Navy* (at Baltimore)	W, 34-17	CBS Sports Net.	3-4, Open week
Sept. 6	VIRGINIA TECH*	L, 35-21	ESPN	4-3, 21-16 loss to Pittsburgh
Sept. 13	KENT STATE^	W, 66-0	ABC or ESPN2	1-6, 39-17 win over Army
Sept. 27	CINCINNATI*%	W, 50-28	BTN	3-3, 41-3 win over SMU
Oct. 4	at Maryland*	W, 52-24	ABC	5-2, 38-31 win over Iowa
Oct. 18	RUTGERS*#	W, 56-17	ABC or ESPN2	5-2, 56-17 loss to Ohio State
Oct. 25	at Penn State	8 p.m.	ABC	4-2, Open week
Nov. 1	ILLINOIS	8 p.m.	ABC/ESPN/ESPN2	3-4, Open week
Nov. 8	at Michigan State*	8 p.m.	ABC	6-1, 56-17 win over Indiana
Nov. 15	at Minnesota*	TBA	TBA	6-1, 39-38 win over Purdue
Nov. 22	INDIANA	TBA	TBA	3-4, 56-17 loss to Michigan State
Nov. 29	MICHIGAN*	TBA	TBA	3-4, Open week

^ – Alumni Band Day * – 2013 Bowl team % – Hall of Fame Day # – Homecoming

himself. They (tight ends) did a pretty good job, we had some run plays in the red zone, Nick sank and then widened out for me and that was it."

Herman didn't seem to mind the swap between the duo, which may be coming more frequently in part because Heuerman has been working his way back to full health after missing time with a foot injury.

"I think it's great," he said. "We don't bat an eye when Jeff needs a break. He tells us and we get Nick in there and the offense doesn't change one bit, as was apparent today. Nick just happened to be the guy who was in when those two plays were called. Nobody bats an eye when he is in."

The tight ends have been an especially useful option for Barrett. He has a rapport with Vannett, who was his throwing partner his first summer in Columbus. On top of that, the two tight ends offer a big target for the Texan signal caller.

"When you have a shorter-than-average quarterback, I think it's important that the big targets, that he tends to find those guys because the surface area that you can miss and see them is a lot greater," Herman said. "Anytime you get a chance to have a big target like that and be able to find them is a good feeling for the guy sitting back there in the pocket."

D-Line Continues To Improve

The defensive line has at times struggled to live up to the impossible expectations set before it, especially without All-American candidate Noah Spence in the fold, but the men in the trenches put together another solid performance against Rutgers.

Defensive linemen were responsible for three of the team's four sacks and eight of the nine tackles for loss. Sophomore defensive end Joey Bosa led the way with two sacks for 10 yards and five total tackles. Frazier also had a game-changing play with the fumble he forced.

"Our D-Line was huge today," Lee said. "Our D-Line played great, I feel. We knew we had to apply pressure on them and that helps out against the run, so we had to get run gaps. Our D-Line knew we had to come in and execute, and Coach Meyer really forced that the past two weeks. I felt they came out and did a pretty good job."

While not as sexy as forced fumbles or sacks, the rushing defense led by the line has also been worthy of acclaim in recent weeks. The Buckeyes held the Scarlet Knights to 149 yards on 38 attempts, an average of 3.9 yards per carry. The defensive linemen aren't happy yet, though, as tiny errors have helped extend drives.

"I think we're playing well so far," said senior defensive end Steve Miller, the man tasked with replacing Spence. "I think we still have a lot to work on. We still make too many mental mistakes. It's not physical, it's just mental. But if we stop making mental mistakes I think we'll be where we want to be as a defense."

He was quick to note, though, that the mistakes haven't come as a result of trying to adjust to anything implemented by new defensive line coach Larry Johnson Sr.

"No, not at all. I think it's the players," he said. "We just have to relax, just relax and when the ball is snapped just go."



JOSH WINSLOW

BIG TARGET – Junior tight end Nick Vannett (81) caught two touchdown passes vs. Rutgers. Vannett has seen plenty of playing time this season while senior tight end Jeff Heuerman has dealt with an early-season foot injury.

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COVER STORY

Meyer, Buckeyes Find Flaws In Blowout Win

Continued From Page 1

the hunger that we have as a defense, and that's why we're going to continue to improve. We play with a chip on our shoulder, and we always go out and try to be perfect out there."

An imperfect Ohio State squad secured a 39-point win, but it wasn't enough to satisfy the team's hunger. That constant craving for flawlessness has fueled the rapidly improving Buckeyes since they were anything but precise in a week two loss to Virginia Tech. The beat-down of Rutgers was a culmination of the growth every unit has experienced since that defeat, especially the offensive line and the secondary, and it showed from the start.

The Scarlet Knights' first-ever play in Ohio Stadium was a 1-yard loss as Adolphus Washington welcomed Rutgers quarterback Gary Nova to the Horseshoe by stuffing an attempted draw. Nova followed that with consecutive incompletions as the Buckeyes

forced a quick three-and-out. Ohio State followed with a crisp six-play, 52-yard drive. The rout continued from there as the Buckeyes mounted a 56-10 lead by the third quarter, but in their eyes it wasn't good enough.

Urban Meyer said it never can be.

"The good thing is that I don't feel like there's a complacent attitude," the coach said. "Complacency is awful in this business and with the players, because when you watch the film, we could actually have played a lot better in certain situations."

The Buckeyes did have a fumble. They turned the ball over on downs and allowed a 40-yard passing play. But as much as the players and coaches wanted to make the Rutgers game about what could have been better, it was really a showcase for how Ohio State has grown since the season opened.

For the most part the same players who saw the field against Virginia Tech were out there against Rutgers, but their execution 42 days after that loss was nearly unrecogniz-



JOSH WINSLOW

STANDING TALL – The Ohio State offensive line, led by junior tackle Taylor Decker (68), did not allow a sack against a Rutgers squad that entered the game with the most sacks in the Big Ten.

able. Nowhere was that more obvious than along the offensive line.

That unit surrendered seven sacks to the Hokies, six in the fourth quarter, and hadn't been truly tested since. The Buckeyes entered the game against Rutgers 101st in the country in sacks allowed while the Scarlet Knights were third in the country and first in the conference with 24 quarterback take-downs. Ohio State kept J.T. Barrett clean, and to his credit the quarterback avoided the rush well, frequently turning potential sacks into gains in the running game.

Like the rest of the team the offensive line wasn't satisfied with its performance or resting on its laurels from four straight blowout victories. Junior left tackle Taylor Decker acknowledged the strong performance but pointed out that there was room to improve along the offensive line and the unit was hungry for that growth.

"There's a ton of talent but we're starting to jell," Decker said. "We've got that cohesiveness going on really well. We're communicating and we're friends. We hang out all the time and we do everything together. Going out there and playing for one of your best friends is huge."

The offensive line showed its growth as a unit against Rutgers, keeping at bay a fierce pass-rush, one that still ranks second in the

Big Ten in sacks despite its no-show against the Buckeyes.

The line held up in the run game as well, epitomized on Ohio State's second drive of the game. That eight-play, 74-yard march ended with six consecutive runs picking up 44 yards. It ended with the big bodies blowing Rutgers off the ball as Ezekiel Elliott found the goal line on a 1-yard score.

"I think we kind of figured ourselves out," the running back said. "We kind of have an identity now. The line play has gotten a lot better and everyone's clicking."

"I think it just takes time. We had a young line, a lot of young players, and we've had to find a little momentum."

Like his offensive line, Barrett showed his growth against the Scarlet Knights. The signal caller did not have his best day as a Buckeye, but he avoided pressure, went through his reads and cleared 100 yards on the ground with two scores to go along with 261 yards and three touchdowns through the air.

"I think week two it was more of not being as prepared as I should have been and I blame myself for that," Barrett said. "I just didn't prepare myself like I should have that week. So now I'm learning from that and just trying to get better."

That improvement was evident on the

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COVER STORY

redshirt freshman's 33-yard touchdown scamper on the first drive of the third quarter. The Buckeyes called a screen on their first-down play, but Rutgers had it well covered. With his lineman already moving downfield Barrett knew he couldn't pass the ball elsewhere, he said, so he elected to take off, weaving through the Knights' defense for a score that would make it 42-7.

That score was one of many offensive plays that the Buckeyes just weren't ready to make early in the season. They weren't happy with their shortcomings then, and that dissatisfaction continues to fuel their progress.

"We're better up front, we're better at quarterback, we're better at the skill positions," offensive coordinator Tom Herman said. "The sign of a good team is continual improvement, and I think we're on that track right now, so to say it's a different offense, it's not, but the players are certainly coming into their own."

"Obviously the scoreboard and the play-by-play or stats say that we're playing pretty well, but as a coach you always try to find the things that you can get better at. I don't know how well we're playing. Obviously we're getting to the meat of the Big Ten schedule here shortly, so I think we'll find out a lot more about what the potential is and how good we really are in the next few weeks."

Defense Takes Another Step

The offense isn't alone in its growth. An interception, two fumbles, four sacks and a touchdown add up to a strong day for the Buckeye defense as it helped to hand Rutgers their worst loss in over a decade. But like the rest of the team, the defenders' effort was not deemed to be good enough.

"It's something that is ingrained in the program and it's that never-satisfied mentality," defensive coordinator Luke Fickell said. "It's not an easy way to live your life, but we understand that. These guys that come here, they understand that. It's the expectation. We have to see the maturity and the growth of what we do."

That expectation is perfection, something no defense will ever truly obtain. There were many plays against Rutgers, however, that showed what the Buckeye defense is capable of.

With 9:58 left in the second quarter and the Knights trailing 21-7 Nova threw a quick pass to Grant. The receiver was stood up by Lee before lineman Rashad Frazier hit the sophomore wideout, forcing a fumble. From there Apple scooped the ball off the turf and 4 yards later six more points were added to the Buckeyes' score.

Every level of the Ohio State defense contributed on that score as they all swarmed to the football. Even on that play defenders weren't patting themselves on the back.

"Not at all," Lee said. "We knew we had to finish the game, and we keep emphasizing and re-emphasizing that week in and week out. We've got to finish. Just finish every practice, everything. The more we do that the more it will help us out. We're never satisfied, probably won't be until the season is over."

Fickell was not pleased with how his defense finished the game, allowing 10 points in the second half. Some of the success the Knights found came against the Buckeyes' second unit as the game was well out of hand when Rutgers found the end zone in the fourth, but that's not an excuse the coordinator could accept. Whether a player is a reserve or not, he shouldn't be satisfied with his outing.

"That's the things that we will be able to go back and really hammer on our guys,"

Fickell said. "If you're never satisfied with what you do, if you demand greatness, those are the things you are going to harp on."

Still, the Buckeyes held Nova, who entered the game as the second-most efficient quarterback in the Big Ten trailing only Barrett, to just 192 yards. Doran Grant hauled in Ohio State's 10th interception of the season and the Knights never found the end zone through the air.

The Ohio State pass defense has often been criticized this season, but in shutting down Nova they showed that like the rest of the team, they're progressing. Doran Grant

said he is hungry for the improvement to continue, adding that the defense has the ability to become a championship-caliber unit.

"I think we're getting there. It's just the little things that we have to keep working on but I think we have potential to be that," he said. "It's just little things. It's just small things on each level of the defense that we can work on and get better. And we can fix that."

That's what the entire team has to focus on after their 56-17 destruction of Rutgers in their first ever meeting – the little things.

Some plays were missed on offense, and the Knights scored more points than the Buckeyes would have liked. Little mistakes.

Ohio State is hungry for perfection, and it didn't get it against Rutgers. With their decimation of the Scarlet Knights giving them their fourth straight blowout win, the Buckeyes remain unsatisfied, a mind-set that has worked out pretty well recently.

"We could go on and on about the mistakes that were made today," Meyer said. "The good thing this is a really good team to coach right now. They're as hungry as our coaching staff and that's a good sign."



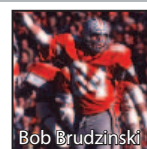
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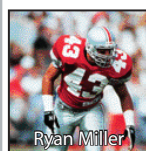
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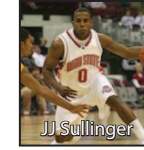
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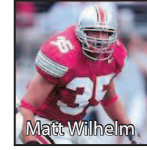
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OHIO STATE VS. RUTGERS

No Slowing Ohio State In Another Rout

By MATTHEW HAGER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State head football coach Urban Meyer expressed concern leading up to his team's Oct. 18 game against visiting Rutgers that the Buckeyes might lose momentum after a second early open week.

Those concerns proved unfounded. The No. 13 Buckeyes continued their run of dominant play and routed an overmatched Rutgers squad 56-17 in front of 106,795 on a cool, windswept homecoming day in Ohio Stadium.

"We had a lot of respect for Rutgers," Meyer said after Ohio State's fourth straight win. "They came in 5-1 (and) really could have been 6-0 ... so (we're) pleased with the get out, that we got out of the locker room fast. Going up 14-0, that's a good sign of several games right in a row."

Redshirt freshman quarterback J.T. Barrett again played a starring role for Ohio State, throwing for 261 yards on 19-of-31 passing with three touchdowns and adding 107 on the ground with two more scores. He ran for 100 yards for the first time in his career and had his third game with more than 300 yards of offense this season.

Ohio State (5-1, 2-0 Big Ten) reached the 50-point mark for the fourth consecutive game, setting a school record, and also tied a program mark by recording its fourth straight game of at least 500 yards of total offense. Sophomore Ezekiel Elliott led the tailbacks with 69 yards on 12 carries with a touchdown and added four receptions for 28

yards. Barrett's top target was again sophomore wide receiver Michael Thomas, who caught four passes for 55 yards.

Ohio State found success offensively throughout the afternoon, posting seven touchdown drives, all in the opening three quarters. The Buckeyes punted only once and finished with 585 yards of total offense and were balanced with 324 rushing yards and 261 through the air.

New Jersey native Eli Apple aided the OSU defense by scoring on a 4-yard fumble return in the first half. Fellow cornerback Doran Grant added an interception. The Buckeyes also recorded four sacks, including two by sophomore defensive end Joey Bosa.

Rutgers (5-2, 1-2) was led by running back Deshaun Watson, who scored both of his team's touchdowns and finished with 83 yards on 15 carries. Veteran quarterback Gary Nova completed 17 of 28 passes for 192 yards with an interception. The Scarlet Knights, who came into the game with a Big Ten-best 24 sacks, recorded none against the Buckeyes.

It did not take Ohio State long to take command. After holding Rutgers to a three-and-out to start the game, the Buckeyes took over with good field position at the OSU 48-yard line. It took Barrett and company just six plays to march 52 yards for the game's first points.

Barrett had the biggest play of the drive on a fourth-down run of 19 yards that advanced the ball to the Rutgers 24. Facing a fourth-and-1, Barrett took the snap and rushed left, getting good blocks from Elliott and Darryl



JOSH WINSLOW

PUMPED UP – Ohio State redshirt freshman quarterback J.T. Barrett (16) pumps his fist after reaching the end zone on a 33-yard touchdown run in the third quarter.

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OHIO STATE VS. RUTGERS

Baldwin, who lined up as an extra tackle in an unbalanced set, to keep the drive alive.

Two plays later, the Buckeyes were in the end zone. With Rutgers not yet set defensively, Barrett found an open Nick Vannett in the middle of the field. The tight end caught the ball at the 3 and turned upfield for the game's first TD, a 12-yarder. Sean Nuernberger booted the extra point to make it 7-0 in favor of Ohio State at the 11:34 mark of the first quarter.

The Buckeyes added to their lead on their second drive of the afternoon, never even facing a third down on an eight-play, 74-yard march. The running game started during the drive, with Elliott rushing four times for 25 yards – including a 1-yard burst for a touchdown that came against a Rutgers defense that was again not set. Barrett completed a 31-yard pass to Jalin Marshall during the drive and rushed for 19 yards on two carries.

The Scarlet Knights answered with a touchdown drive that lasted 10 plays and traveled 66 yards. Peoples carried the ball on seven of the 10 plays, gaining 34 of those yards, including 20 on one burst through a hole on the left side. His last rush came on a 1-yard TD run that, following a Kyle Federico PAT, halved RU's deficit to 14-7 with 27 seconds left in the opening quarter.

While the Rutgers offense took time to get some momentum, the Buckeyes continued their offensive assault after the Peoples TD. Barrett capped a six-play, 67-yard drive that took 2:14 by finding Vannett open down the seam for a 26-yard touchdown with 13:03 left before halftime. Barrett completed all three of his pass attempts for 53 yards on the drive.

After the extra-point boot, Ohio State held a 21-7 advantage. Through OSU's first three drives, Barrett was 8 for 8 with 112 yards

and two touchdowns. He added 38 rushing yards as well.

Ohio State's defense scored the next points. On the first play following Cameron Johnston's first and only punt of the afternoon for the Buckeyes – a 53-yarder that pinned Rutgers at its own 10 – Nova completed a screen pass to Janarion Grant. Grant was quickly hit by linebacker Darron Lee, and defensive lineman Rashad Frazier followed him, jarring the ball from Grant. Apple scooped up the fumble and returned the ball 4 yards for a touchdown.

Nuernberger's PAT made it 28-7 with 9:50 remaining in the second quarter.

Ohio State put the game even further out of reach on its next possession following another three-and-out from the defense. Following a short punt, the Buckeyes drove 51 yards in eight plays, and fifth-year senior Rod Smith capped the drive with a 3-yard TD run up the middle for his fourth touchdown run in as many games.

Barrett again played a big part in the in the march, completing a 16-yard pass to senior tight end Jeff Heuerman on a third-and-7 at the RU 35 and a 14-yard gain to Michael Thomas that set up Smith's TD run.

With 4:32 left before halftime, Ohio State held a 35-7 lead. That score held thanks to a defensive stand in the half's final moments.

Nova drove the Scarlet Knights all the way to the OSU 6 thanks to a methodical 14-play drive that included a converted fourth-and-5 as well as a first down earned via third-down penalty, but the senior QB threw an interception on a fade pass to Ohio State senior cornerback Doran Grant with 12 seconds remaining.

The Buckeye beat went on after the break.

Ohio State began the second half on offense and needed just four plays to add another touchdown. After Elliott started things off with a 10-yard rush over left end, Barrett took care of the rest. He completed a pair of 18-yard passes to Thomas before rushing for a 33-yard touchdown on a scramble up the middle of the field and through the Rutgers defense. Nuernberger's PAT made it 42-7 with 13:17 on the third-quarter clock.

Rutgers went three-and-out on its next drive, and Barrett called his own number again on Ohio State's ensuing possession – and next trip to the end zone. He concluded a 10-play, 55-yard drive by rushing for a 5-yard touchdown on a fourth-and-goal play. The extra point extended the OSU lead to 49-7 and sent even more of the chilly fans to the exits with 8:24 left in the third quarter.

The Scarlet Knights finally got back on the scoreboard on their ensuing drive. Federico made a 42-yard field goal with 6:36 remaining in the quarter to end a six-play, 51-yard drive. Back-to-back rushes of 28 and 19 yards, respectively, by Justin Goodwin and Peoples set up the kick.

Barrett and the Buckeyes' final touchdown drive included the highlight of the game. He threw a 42-yard pass to Devin Smith to move the Buckeyes into the red zone at the RU 11, and after tossing an incompleting, Barrett tossed a pass toward senior Evan Spencer. The pass was slightly overthrown, but the wide receiver was able to get a hand on it and bring it in for a one-handed grab and a touchdown that made it 56-10 after the PAT with 4:14 remaining in the quarter.

Rutgers set the final score with a 12-yard touchdown run by Peoples on the first play of the fourth quarter. Federico made the PAT at the end of the eight-play, 80-yard drive that ended with 14:54 left in regulation.

First Games For Big Ten Teams At Ohio Stadium

Michigan

Won 19-0 – Oct. 21, 1922

Chicago

Won 9-0 – Nov. 11, 1922

Iowa

Won 12-9 – Nov. 18, 1922

Illinois

Won 9-0 – Nov. 24, 1923

Purdue

Lost 7-0 – Oct. 4, 1924

Indiana

Won 12-7 – Nov. 8, 1924

Northwestern

Won 19-13 – Oct. 15, 1927

Wisconsin

Tied 0-0 – Nov. 1, 1939

Minnesota

Won 13-7 – Oct. 19, 1940

Michigan State

Won 28-13 – Nov. 7, 1953

Penn State

Lost 24-6 – Oct. 30, 1993

Nebraska

Lost 63-38 – Oct. 7, 2012

Rutgers

Lost 56-17 – Oct. 18, 2014



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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 56, Rutgers 17

Oct. 18, 2014 – Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
RUTGERS	7	0	3	7	17
OHIO STATE	14	21	21	0	56

First Quarter

OSU – Vannett, 12 yard pass from Barrett (Nuernberger kick), 11:34; 6 plays, 52 yards, 2:29 TOP.

OSU – Elliott, 1 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 5:24; 8 plays, 74 yards, 3:33 TOP.

RU – Peoples, 1 yard run (Federico kick), 0:27; 10 plays, 66 yards, 4:51 TOP.

Second Quarter

OSU – Vannett, 26 yard pass from Barrett (Nuernberger kick), 13:03; 6 plays, 67 yards, 2:14 TOP.

OSU – Apple, 4 yard fumble recovery (Nuernberger kick), 9:50.

OSU – R.Smith, 3 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 4:32; 8 plays, 51 yards, 3:39 TOP.

Third Quarter

OSU – Barrett, 33 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 13:17; 4 plays 79 yards, 1:43 TOP.

OSU – Barrett, 5 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 8:24; 10 plays, 55 yards, 2:58 TOP.

RU – Federico, 42 yard field goal, 6:36; 6 plays, 51 yards, 1:48 TOP.

OSU – Spencer, 11 yard pass from Barrett (Nuernberger kick), 4:14; 6 plays, 64 yards, 2:16 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

RU – Peoples, 12 yard run (Federico kick), 14:54; 8 plays, 80 yards, 4:14 TOP.

Att. – 106,795.

Weather – 53 degrees, cloudy, heavy rain late; wind NW 16 mph.

Team Statistics

	RU	OSU
First Downs	18	31
Rushing	7	19
Passing	10	12
Penalty	1	0
Rushing-Yards	38-149	40-324
Passing Yards	196	261
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	18-29-1	19-31-0
Offensive Plays	67	71
Total Net Yards	345	585
Third Down Efficiency	3-13	5-9
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	2-3
Punts-Avg.	6-36.3	1-53.0
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	1-1
Penalties	0-0	4-28
Time of Possession	31:26	28:34

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – RU: Peoples 15-83; Goodwin 11-64; Martin 5-23; Nova 7-(-21). **OSU:** Barrett 7-107; Elliott 12-69; Samuel 4-59; C.Jones 5-44; Wilson 4-21; R.Smith 4-21; Ball 1-7; TEAM 3-(-4).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – RU: Nova 17-28-1-192-0; Laviano 1-1-0-4-0.

OSU: Barrett 19-31-0-261-3.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – RU: Carroo 5-100; Goodwin 4-28; J.Grant 3-8; Burton 2-22; Kroft 2-17; Turzilli 1-17; Patton 1-4. **OSU:** Thomas 4-55; Elliott 4-28; Marshall 3-58; Vannett 2-38; Spencer 2-10; D.Smith 1-42; Heuerman 1-16; Samuel 1-7; C.Smith 1-7.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – RU: Gleeson 6-36.3-50. **OSU:** Johnston 1-53.0-53.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – RU: None. **OSU:** Marshall 4-5.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – RU: J.Grant 6-105. **OSU:** Wilson 3-68; Marshall 1-26.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – RU: None. **OSU:** None.

FORCED FUMBLES – RU: None. **OSU:** Frazier, D.Webb.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds) – RU: Pinnix-Odrick 1-0. **OSU:** Apple 1-4; E.Smith 1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – RU: None. **OSU:** D.Grant 1-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – RU: None. **OSU:** Bosa 2.0-10; Lee 1.0-11; M.Hill 1.0-10.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – RU: Longa 1.0-3; Glashen 1.0-1. **OSU:** Bosa 2.0-10; S.Miller 2.0-3; Lee 1.0-11; M.Hill 1.0-10; Frazier 1.0-1; Washington 1.0-1; Lewis 1.0-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – RU: Glashen 7-0-7; Barnwell 4-3-7; Milewski 3-4-7; Aiken 5-1-6; Longa 4-1-5; De.Stephenson 3-1-4; Snyder 2-2-4; Waters 3-0-3; Jacobs 2-1-3; Gause 2-1-3; Liston 1-2-3; Boggs 2-0-2; Pinnix-Odrick 2-0-2; T.J.Taylor 1-1-2; Hamilton 1-1-2; Kirksey 0-2-2; Agudosi 1-0-1; Marquez 1-0-1; Nash 0-1-1; Burton 0-1-1; Matthews 0-1-1; Lambert 0-1-1. **OSU:** D.Grant 5-2-7; J.Perry 4-3-7; Powell 2-4-6; Bosa 2-3-5; McMillan 2-3-5; S.Miller 4-0-4; Bell 3-1-4; E.Smith 3-1-4; C.Grant 2-2-4; Apple 1-2-3; Burrows 1-2-3; Spencer 2-0-2; Lee 2-0-2; C.Williams 1-1-2; Frazier 1-1-2; M.Hill 1-1-2; Conley 0-2-2; D.Webb 1-0-1; TEAM 1-0-1; Reeves 1-0-1; Washington 1-0-1; Schutt 1-0-1; Niehoff 1-0-1; Lewis 1-0-1; Worley 0-1-1; Booker 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **RUTGERS:** Offense, J.Grant, Carroo, Peoples, Nova, Turzilli, Burton, Bujari, Muller, K.Johnson, Lumpkin, Alexander, Federico. Defense, Glashen, Longa, Barnwell, Waters, De.Stephenson, K.Snyder, Gause, Milewski, Hamilton, Mera, Kirksey, Gleeson. Reserves, Laviano, Martin, Hicks, Agudosi, Bimonte, Lambert, Boggs, Liston, Aiken, Jacobs, Cioffi, Goodwin, Taylor, Nash, Marquez, Arcidiacono, Bergen, Joseph, Pinnix-Odrick; Turay, Davis Jr., D.Miller, Leoni, Nelson, Brodie, Denman, Flanagan, Tsimis, Lucy, Kroft, Matthews, Patton, Da.Stephenson, Wilkins. **OHIO STATE:** Offense, Thomas, Heuerman, Spencer, D.Smith, Elliott, Barrett, Boren, Price, Elflein, Decker, Baldwin, Nuernberger. Defense, Bell, D.Grant, Apple, C.Grant, Powell, J.Perry, Lee, Bennett, S.Miller, Washington, Bosa, Johnston. Reserves, Wilson, Samuel, McMillan, E.Smith, R.Smith, D.Webb, Niehoff, Holmes, C.Jones, Burrows, Marshall, Frazier, Sarac, Conley, Reeves, Ball, Bogard, Booker, Worley, Fada, Clinton, Haynes, Rock, Burger, Munger, C.Williams, Farris, Lewis, Gaskey, C.Carter, Underwood, J.Jones, M.Hill, Brown, Vannett, Clark, C.Smith, Baugh, Greene, Schutt.

Season Statistics

2014 Game-By-Game				Scoring						
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS	
Aug. 30	(5) Navy**	W, 34-17	57,579	–	37-37	–	–	–	6-9	55
Sept. 6	(8) VIRGINIA TECH	L, 35-21	107,517	–	–	–	–	–	–	30
Sept. 13	(22) KENT STATE	W, 66-0	104,404	–	–	–	–	–	–	30
Sept. 27	(22) CINCINNATI	W, 50-28	108,362	–	–	–	–	–	–	24
Oct. 4	(20) at Maryland	W, 52-24	51,802	–	–	–	–	–	–	24
Oct. 18	(13) RUTGERS	W, 56-17	106,795	–	–	–	–	–	–	18
Oct. 25	at Penn State	8 p.m.		–	–	–	–	–	–	12
Nov. 1	ILLINOIS	8 p.m.		–	–	–	–	–	–	12
Nov. 8	at Michigan State	8 p.m.		–	–	–	–	–	–	12
Nov. 15	at Minnesota	TBA		–	–	–	–	–	–	6
Nov. 22	INDIANA	TBA		–	–	–	–	–	–	6
Nov. 29	MICHIGAN	TBA		–	–	–	–	–	–	6
* OSU's gameday AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.										
** at Baltimore										
Team Statistics				OSU Totals						
				173 37-37 – – 6-9 279						
				OPP Totals 16 16-16 – – 3-5 121						
* – Ohio State recorded a team safety.										

Team Statistics				FG Distance						
	OSU	Opp		0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total		
First Downs	173	103		–	0-0	3-5	0-0	6-9		
Rushing	97	49		3-4	0-0	3-5	0-0	6-9		
Passing	68	44		0-0	1-2	1-2	1-1	3-5		
Penalty	8	10								
Average Per Game/Rush	259.8	137.8								
Average Per Game/Pass	274.0	181.7								
Total Offense	3,203	1,917								
Total Plays	460	384								
Average Per Game	533.8	319.5								
Average Per Play	7.0	5.0								
Penalties-Yards	33-279	29-252								
Fumbles-Lost	9-4	7-4								
Third Down Efficiency	36-73	27-80								
Percentage	49%	34%								
Fourth Down Efficiency	6-12	3-4								
Percentage	50%	75%								
Sacks-Yards	16-119	13-95								
Time Of Possession Avg.	32:20	27:40								
Score										
By Quarters										
Ohio State	82	72	76	49	–	279	46.5			
Opponents	31	35	24	31	–	121	20.2			
Individual Statistics				Punting						
	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Rushing										
Ezekiel Elliott	91	531	5.8	4	28					
J.T. Barrett	78	383	4.9	4	33					
Curtis Samuel	36	251	7.0	2	34					
Cardale Jones	16	141	8.8	0	21					
Rod Smith	24	101	4.2	4	14					
Dontre Wilson	13	80	6.2	0	21					
Warren Ball	11	48	4.4	0	12					
Jalin Marshall	6	27	4.5	0	12					
Johnnie Dixon	4	20	5.0	0	9					
Bri'onte Dunn	4	16	4.0	0	6					
Jeffie Johnson	1	2	2.0	0	2					
TEAM	7	-41	-5.9	0	0					
OSU Totals	291	1,559	5.4	14	34					
OPP Totals	208	827	4.0	8	67					
Passing				Interceptions						
	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Eff.	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD Long
J.T. Barrett	107	164	65.2	1,615	20-5	182.11				
Cardale Jones	3	5	60.0	29	0-0	108.72				
OSU Totals	110	169	65.1	1,644	20-5	179.94				
OPP Totals	103	176	58.5	1,090	7-10	112.31				
Receiving				Def. Leaders						
	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Michael Thomas	21	377	18.0	5	63					
Dontre Wilson	14	221	15.8	1	40					
Ezekiel Elliott	14	137	9.8	0	22					
Devin Smith	12	355	29.6	5	80					
Nick Vannett	10	120	12.0	3	26					
Corey Smith	9	113	12.6	0	25					
Jalin Marshall	9	97	10.8	2	31					
Evan Spencer	7	73	10.4	2	19					
Curtis Samuel	7	59	8.4	0	30					
Jeff Heuerman	5	82	16.4	0	28					
Rod Smith	1	8	8.0	1	8					
Marcus Baugh	1	2	2.0	1	2					
OSU Totals	110	1,644	14.9	20	80					
OPP Totals	103	1,090	10.6	7	83					

Punt Returns				Kickoff Returns						
	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Dontre Wilson	14	136	9.7	0	32					
Jalin Marshall	6	111	18.5	0	51					
Jeff Greene	1	10	10.0	0	0					
Ron Tanner	0	22	0.0	0	9					
OSU Totals	21	279	13.3	0	51					
OPP Totals	3	32	10.7	0	35					

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Joshua Perry	27	18	45	3.0-12	0.5-6
Vonn Bell	21	14	35	–	–
Tyvis Powell	19	14	33	–	–
Curtis Grant	13	19	32	3.0-18	1.0-11
Darron Lee	15	11	26	6.0-26	2.0-18
Doran Grant	19	5	24	–	–
Joey Bosa	9	11	20	9.0-57	5.5-44
Raekwon McMillan	11	9	20	3.5-14	2.0-10
Eli Apple	10	7	17	–	–
A.Washington	6	8	14	4.0-12	1.0-5
Steve Miller	9	4	13	2.0-3	–
Cam Burrows	5	7	12	–	–
Rashad Frazier	6	5	11	2.0-4	1.0-3
Michael Bennett	5	5	10	3.0-11	1.0-6
Armani Reeves	5	4	9	–	–
Jalyn Holmes	5	2	7	0.5-0	–
Chris Worley	5	2	7	–	–
OSU Totals	232	170	402	41-179	16-119
OPP Totals	299	194	493	31-160	13-95

OHIO STATE VS. RUTGERS

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 56, Rutgers 17

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on what he wanted to see during the game: "Get out fast and play good pass defense against a team that was on fire throwing the ball. (Gary Nova was the) most improved quarterback I think in the country from a year ago because we went back, watched some film last year, and that was a much improved offense."

Junior linebacker Joshua Perry on how the Buckeyes are playing: "We just have to keep momentum. We have a lot of young guys that we're playing right now, and some of them haven't been in situations, but that's where the older guys come in and we just have to keep them locked in and we have to keep the momentum going. We have to keep a lot of the positives we have. Our quarterback's playing really, really well, our running backs are amazing, our receivers are catching the ball pretty well. Defense, we're starting to play team defense, we're starting to tighten up some things, so as long as we can keep that momentum going we'll be good."

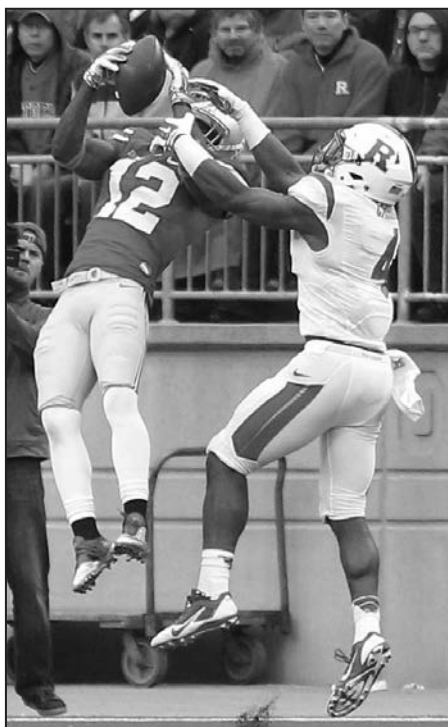
Co-defensive coordinator/linebackers coach Luke Fickell on the defense's priority: "The challenge was to keep the safeties deep to give us some help on the deep shots and be able to really stop the run with the seven without the extra guy in the box just to give yourself some positive on the big-play passes, which is what we thought they had to try to do to beat us."

Senior defensive end Steve Miller on the run defense: "I think our run defense is pretty good, but we just have to be consistent in our run defense. We need to get off the ball and keep running sideline to sideline and push the zone forward."

Rutgers quarterback Gary Nova on OSU's defense: "I have to credit them, they played great defense. There were a lot of self-inflicted things and things we haven't done all year we did today. When you have two good teams playing each other the margin for error is very small."

Cornerback Doran Grant on his second-quarter interception on a fade pass: "It was one of those calls. (Co-defensive coordinator Chris) Ash made a great call, called a buzz coverage. By formation I knew (the fade) was a possibility. It feels good because you know what you're doing is working and that trust is there, especially with your coaches."

Fickell on the defense taking the next step: "I think we see guys who understand the culture of what we've done. They're taking that next step. It's ingrained in what they do, it's something that is becoming complete habit to them. They're trying to take that next step. It's about execution now. We don't have to talk about and stress and harp on the four to six (seconds of) effort because they do it every single day. We are starting to do that next step



JOSH WINSLOW

TURNOVER – Ohio State senior cornerback Doran Grant (12) recorded his second interception of the season when he caught a Gary Nova pass in the end zone on a fade pattern.

to where the execution is that next thing that we have to do to be great."

Linebacker Darron Lee on the defensive growth since week one: "We are executing our game plan a lot better. That got exposed when we played Virginia Tech. We didn't really execute well. I felt we executed better this time, third down for sure. I felt we executed a lot better on that. They got us on a couple of deep balls when the play broke down for them, but I feel like as a defense we've come a long way and we still have a long way to go. It's gotten a lot better."

Rutgers head coach Kyle Flood on playing OSU: "They have an excellent football team. I think today is a great example that when you play a really talented football team the margin of error is very small. And we just didn't play very clean football. They certainly executed better than we did today."

Ohio State quarterback J.T. Barrett on what he exploited in Rutgers' defense: "Being that their corners play a little off, it still was Cover-2 cloud, but I think that was it. It wasn't anything

too crazy. That was a good defense that we played. We just outexecuted them today."

Running back Ezekiel Elliott on preparing for Rutgers' pressure: "I think we did a good job of preparing for the blitz. We stayed on schedule so we didn't get in many situations where we'd have to worry about being blitzed like third-and-long. We put in an empty set this week for third downs just to spread them out so they wouldn't be able to blitz as much."

Offensive guard Pat Elflein on the offensive line play: "It's what we're supposed to do by shutting defenses down. (Line coach Ed) Warinner really prepared us for this game. We came in and got the job done."

Barrett on distributing the ball: "Receivers always want the ball. They think they're open. They'll come to the sideline and be like, 'Hey, man, I saw this and that,' and I'll be like, 'You didn't see the guy behind you. I was trying to help you out so you don't get smashed.'"

Co-offensive coordinator and QBs coach Tom Herman on spreading the ball around: "We're trying to. We've developed some talent at the skill positions that we need to experiment a little bit is maybe the right word or at least try some different things to keep those players involved and then obviously to hopefully gain an advantage against the defense. We're working some kinks out, and we'll still try to keep everybody involved as long as the game dictates it and the defense dictates it."

Herman on the rising clamor surrounding Barrett's chances for the Heisman Trophy: "They don't ask me that. I don't know. I don't know what the qualifications are for that trophy. I thought Ndamukong Suh should have won it a few years ago. I thought he was the most dominant player in college football that year. Maybe that's a few scars coming back from having to coach against him, but I don't know what the criteria for that award is. I just want him to keep getting better as the Ohio State quarterback."

Offensive tackle Taylor Decker on the Buckeyes' national perception: "I think a little earlier in the season they forgot about us, but we're going to make some noise. We just take care of what we can take care of and the pieces will fall where they may, but I definitely think we're headed the right direction. We take care of our end of the deal, whatever happens in the rest of the country, it's whatever. We want people to know that we're a team to be reckoned with."

Barrett on the Buckeyes' playoff hopes: "We're really not worried about that. There are definitely still good teams out there. Our main focus is win the Big Ten, just keep on grinding, getting better each and every week, but the main goal at the end of the season is to play for a championship in November."



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OHIO STATE VS. RUTGERS

Buckeye Game Analysis

Play Of The Game

It wasn't quite déjà vu, but Ohio State used a second-quarter turnover for the second straight game to stuff an apparent change in momentum and put away a new Big Ten opponent in the Oct. 18 win vs. Rutgers.

Against Maryland, it was a Darron Lee interception that led directly to a game-clinching score late in the first half in OSU's 52-24 victory. In the Rutgers matchup in Ohio Stadium, the turnover came earlier, but it had the same effect on the game.

OSU took a 21-7 lead on the Scarlet Knights in the first 17 minutes, but the Buckeyes offense was forced into a punt when it got the ball back next thanks to two consecutive false starts that doomed the drive before it even got started.

As usual, Cameron Johnston boomed the resulting punt, driving a 53-yarder all the way to the Rutgers 10. Still, the Scarlet Knights could have pulled within a score with a successful drive.

But for the second week in a row, it took just one play for the Buckeyes to change the game, and again Lee was involved. Rutgers quarterback Gary Nova had his team in the I-formation and two receivers split to the left, the wide side of the field, while Ohio State was in its base 4-3 defense.

At the snap, Nova took two steps backward and threw a screen pass to the slot receiver on the left, Janarion Grant, who leaped to catch the ball just wide of the hashmark at the 8. Momentum carried him further toward the sideline, and by the time he was able to cut upfield, he was met by Lee.

Grant tried to cut inside the walkout linebacker, but Lee grabbed him with his left arm then his right, standing him up at the 9. Grant was facing toward the goal line when OSU defensive end Rashad Frazier came in support, drilling him in the back to help his teammate make the tackle.

As Grant started to fall to the ground, the ball squirted out from his left arm, coming fully free an instant before he hit the turf. Following his instincts, cornerback Eli Apple started to race toward the pileup from the 15 and saw the free ball. Apple kicked it into full gear and had no trouble picking up the loose ball at the 4 before taking two steps into the end zone for his first career touchdown.

The play was reviewed but stood, and the score gave Ohio State a three-TD advantage with 9:50 left in the half. It was 35-7 before halftime and 49-7 before the Scarlet Knights got back on the board again.

"That was a team defense kind of play," linebacker Joshua Perry said. "One guy holds a guy up and then we got guys straining to get there. We had a D-lineman knock the ball out and then we had someone from the secondary come and scoop and score. So we had every part of the defense there and then it also takes a little bit of the pressure off the offense. They know that when the other team has the ball they're either going to get it back in good field position or we might cause a turnover."

Hidden Play Of The Game

Ohio State's early offensive explosion might not have happened if the team had been stopped on fourth down on its very first set of downs in the game, but a new play in the playbook helped provide the necessary spark.

The Buckeyes earned 9 yards on their first three plays and faced fourth-and-1 at the Rutgers 43-yard line, with head coach Urban Meyer deciding to go for it, as he often has done in such circumstances as Ohio State's head coach.

Ohio State lined up with an unbalanced line to the left, with usual right tackle Darryl Baldwin moving over to the left side and lining up outside left tackle Taylor Decker. That gave the Buckeyes three offensive linemen to the left of center Jacoby Boren, with only right guard Pat Elflein and tight end Jeff Heurman to the right.

OSU quarterback J.T. Barrett lined up in the shotgun with Ezekiel Elliott to his left, and at the snap Barrett followed Elliott to the left in what was basically a QB sweep. Baldwin and Elliott combined to push defensive end David Milewski out of the play and Decker sealed off the tackle, allowing Barrett to race through the hole and gain 19 yards. Two plays later, the Buckeyes were in the end zone, and the rout was on.



JOSH WINSLOW PHOTOS

TD TIME – Ohio State redshirt freshman cornerback Eli Apple (13), a New Jersey native, scored a touchdown against Rutgers on a 4-yard fumble recovery.

What Worked Well

- **Starting fast:** The big question leading into the game was whether Ohio State would be able to keep its momentum going after a second open week within the first seven weeks of the season – an open week of which it was clear Meyer wasn't a huge fan. The Buckeyes answered that question quickly, posting their fourth consecutive fast start on the way to their fourth consecutive dominating victory.

- **Stopping the pass rush:** Rutgers came in with 24 sacks in six games and had a sack on nearly 10 percent of opposing dropbacks. The Ohio State offensive line, so maligned after being abused by Virginia Tech, clearly took the challenge to heart and did not allow a sack. Barrett also had a good day, showing impressive pocket sense for a redshirt freshman when the rush did get by his blockers up front.

- **Winning third down:** Rutgers finished the game just 3 for 13 on third down, and the Scarlet Knights were particularly punchless in the passing game. Rutgers had 11 dropbacks on third down and went 4 for 10 with an interception and a sack, converting just two of those chances.

What Didn't Work

- **Finishing out the game:** Meyer was annoyed that some of the backups didn't have great games, as the Buckeyes allowed Rutgers some second-half success on offense including more than 100 yards on the ground. The goal of any coach is to see his team play a complete game, and other than the contest against overmatched Kent State, the Buckeyes haven't checked that off the list yet.

Inside The Numbers

4: Ohio State has scored a touchdown on its opening drive in each of the past four games on the way to topping the 50-point barrier in each of those contests.

5: Cardale Jones has appeared in relief of Barrett in each of the four games, taking 55 snaps, but he has thrown just five passes including zero in nine plays vs. Rutgers.

9: Barrett hit nine receivers in the passing game, keeping a trend going. Eleven receivers caught passes vs. Kent State, 10 had catches vs. Cincinnati, and nine have hauled in passes in the first two Big Ten games vs. Maryland and Rutgers.

34: Curtis Samuel's 34-yard run for Ohio State in the fourth quarter was the longest run from scrimmage of the season for the Buckeyes.

106,795: The attendance in Ohio Stadium was the most Rutgers has ever played in front of, edging the 103,925 in Neyland Stadium on Sept. 29, 2002, when the Scarlet Knights visited Tennessee. Rutgers also set a home stadium record earlier this year when 53,774 were in High Point

Solutions Stadium for the Scarlet Knights' first Big Ten game vs. Penn State.

Reviewing The Matchups

Ohio State rush offense vs. Rutgers rush defense: Ohio State put together a 2013-esque effort in this area, finishing with 324 net yards and 8.1 yards per carry. Last year's squad often topped 8 yards per carry in Big Ten play, so this was vintage Urban Meyer/Tom Herman rushing offense. Four players – Barrett, Elliott, Samuel and Jones – finished with at least 40 yards rushing. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Rutgers rush offense vs. Ohio State rush defense: The issues Ohio State had finishing the game – at least the ones in Meyer's eyes – are encapsulated here. Rutgers had just 34 yards on 19 first-half rushes, 20 on one run by Deshaun Watson, before racking up 115 net yards in the second half. When the game was on the line, though, OSU's run fits were mostly excellent. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Ohio State pass offense vs. Rutgers pass defense: Barrett is consistently outperforming the numbers players such as Braxton Miller and Terrelle Pryor put up through the air, finishing with 261 yards and three touchdowns in what is essentially becoming the norm for the redshirt freshman quarterback. Credit must also go to the Ohio State receivers, who are making themselves targets right now. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Rutgers pass offense vs. Ohio State pass defense: Nova sliced through Michigan to the tune of more than 400 yards through the air, but it was pretty clear he wasn't going to reach that mark against Ohio State, ending up with 192 yards and no touchdowns. He did hit a big one when Leonte Carroo got behind the defense thanks to a miscommunication, so that continues to bear watching, but in the end OSU was solid and got consistent pressure. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Special teams: Ohio State dominated the punting game, as Johnston boomed his only try while fellow Australian Tim Gleeson seemed to battle the winds whipping through Ohio Stadium, averaging a net of 28.8 yards on his six punts. Ohio State again had solid kick coverage, with Meyer at one point racing on to the field to congratulate Vonn Bell for a tackle that started Rutgers deep in its own territory. **EDGE: Ohio State**

Intangibles: Unseasonably cold weather, an unwanted week off, a new conference opponent, homecoming – there were a few reasons for Ohio State to not be its sharpest but instead Ohio State ran over its fourth straight opponent. The Buckeyes have outscored the last four teams by an average margin of 38.8 points, and it's becoming more and more clear there aren't that many teams left on the schedule that can challenge the Buckeyes. **EDGE: Ohio State**

– Jeff Svoboda