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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Dec. 1, 2018



JOSH WINSLOW

PULLING AWAY – Ohio State fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell (21) caught six passes for 192 yards and two touchdowns as the Buckeyes topped Michigan and head coach Jim Harbaugh (pointing behind Campbell), 62-39, for a seventh straight victory over the Wolverines.

Buckeyes Roll To Statement Victory In 'The Game'

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Winning The Game is nothing new for Urban Meyer's Ohio State.

He was 6 for 6 against Michigan as the head coach in Columbus heading into 2018 with his eyes set on a perfect 7-0 start. This time, though, the Buckeyes weren't supposed to win – at least if you ask almost anyone outside the program.

Michigan was ranked fourth in the nation. The Wolverines were 10-1 overall and a perfect 8-0 in the Big Ten. They were favored in The Game in Columbus for the first time since 2004.

It was Ohio State that was coming off a 52-51 overtime win against unranked Maryland. It was the Buckeyes who had struggled on defense all year and who were preparing to face the No. 1 defense in the nation in various major categories.

But when the clock struck zero at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 24, it was Meyer's Buckeyes ahead once again. And it wasn't close. Ohio State responded to being the underdog by shellacking the Wolverines, 62-39. Meyer's perfect streak against Michigan stayed alive in resounding fashion.

At this point, the Ohio State players themselves can hardly remember The Game going any other way.

"I don't recall the last time they won against us, I was definitely a little boy and we did not want to be part of the team that gave them the first dub (win) in, what, 10 years?" said junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones.

Seven years, actually. But Jones was still a high school freshman at the time.

For Ohio State's seniors – playing on Senior Day – it was a fourth pair of

gold pants, five for some like Parris Campbell, who caught six passes for 192 yards and a two scores, including a 78-yard catch-and-run, in his final game at the Horseshoe.

For those seniors, it was the perfect cap to a regular season that was marred by off-field controversies out of their control. Meyer commended his team for fighting through that – it was him who was suspended three games to begin the year, not them – to come out with a win on the biggest stage yet.

"I'm extremely proud of our players, the way they've fought through it," Meyer said of the distractions. "Like someone was saying, nothing's ever good enough. And obviously, there was some adversity earlier in the year – not some, big-time adversity. And to come back against your rival and play like that, that's a focused team that loves each other and cares about each other."

For Michigan's seniors, it was a fourth loss when a win would have meant more than anything. Ahead of the season, Michigan set its sights on a "revenge tour" after losing to Michigan State, Penn State, Wisconsin and Ohio State last season. The last stop in that tour was Columbus after the Wolverines dispatched the other three teams with ease, but what became another career highlight for one set of seniors was a fourth (or fifth) lowlight for the others.

"That's the toughest part," Michigan senior safety Tyree Kinnel said. "I'm going to have to sleep on that the rest of my life, I wasn't able to win in this game. Other than that, I'm blessed to be here."

Slow Devastation

For Ohio State in The Game, it wasn't just a win. The Buckeyes turned a game many expected them to lose into one of the most resounding victories in the history of the rivalry.

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COVER STORY

Buckeye Seniors Finish Undefeated Against U-M

Continued From Page 1

Neither team had scored more than 42 points in The Game since Ohio State's 50-14 win in 1968. The Buckeyes had never scored more than 50, and Michigan reached 60 or

more just once – all the way back in 1902, an 86-0 victory for the Wolverines in the fourth-ever matchup between the two schools.

Ohio State – again, the underdog – posted 567 total yards, including 396 through the air. Nobody had gained 300 passing yards

against Michigan's No. 1 pass defense this season.

The Buckeye defense allowed 401 total yards, but it came up big when it mattered most, stopping Michigan on 8 of 14 third-down attempts and getting a pair of interceptions in the second half.

It was a dominant performance in many regards for Ohio State. From Michigan's perspective, it was slow devastation – at least that's how Kinnel put it.

"They slowly devastated us throughout the

game," he said. "Knowing all the yards they were putting up and how easily they were scoring, it was tough. It was very tough. They completely beat us everywhere. Run game, pass game, everyone is to blame."

It wasn't always rosy for Ohio State, though. The Buckeyes found themselves ahead, 21-6, with 3:18 left in the first half. The rout was on – at least momentarily.

Michigan's ensuing drive was extended when Ohio State junior cornerback Damon Arnette was flagged for pass interference on

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COVER STORY

third-and-9 near midfield. Three plays later, Michigan signal caller Shea Patterson hit receiver Nico Collins for a 23-yard score.

Then disaster struck. Ohio State sophomore H-back Demario McCall fumbled the ensuing kickoff, and Michigan recovered at the 9. The Wolverines scored on a pass from Patterson to Chris Evans on first down and lined up to go for two and the tie. The Buckeyes forced an incomplete pass, though, to keep a two-point advantage. Then sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins guided a seven-play, 74-yard drive in the final 41 seconds of the half to get Ohio State in field-goal range, giving the Buckeyes a 24-19 lead at the break.

Despite letting most of a once-big advantage slip away, Jones said the Buckeyes stayed confident in the halftime locker room. They knew they had the upper hand. They felt they had the better team, and they were playing like it.

"Pretty composed and calm," Jones said when asked what the mood was in the locker room after 30 minutes. "We gave up some points that we kind of gave them. We felt like they didn't take over the game. We felt like we were very much in control, and we came out, we hit them right in the mouth off the top."

After the defense and special teams had slipped up toward the end of the first half, it was time for the offense to get some help. The Buckeyes had a nine-play, 56-yard drive early in the second half, but the offense stalled, settling for a chip-shot field goal, making it 27-19.

Then the defense got a stop, forcing fourth-and-8 at the Michigan 36. Freshman wide receiver Chris Olave blocked the ensuing punt, and fellow freshman Sevin Banks returned it for the score.

After nearly allowing Michigan to tie the game late in the first half, the Buckeyes suddenly had a big lead once again at 34-19. From there, the Wolverines had some success on offense, but the Buckeyes dominated the game with their aerial attack while getting timely running – like Campbell's 78-yard scamper that made it 48-25 early in the fourth quarter.

"I don't know about 62 (points), but I knew we were going to come out and put on a show," Haskins said. "I'm proud of how we played today. It started up front with the O-line. And the playmakers made plays. That's what mattered."

A Statement Win

After The Game, Ohio State fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon was asked if he thought his team was one of the top four in the country.

"I think it is," he said.

Unfortunately for Dixon and the Buckeyes, it's not his opinion that counts. It's also not a conversation that was ready to be settled considering Ohio State has one more game – the Big Ten title bout in Indianapolis against Northwestern on Dec. 1 – before the College Football Playoff field is announced.

Dixon noted that he thought Ohio State made a statement. At this level, statement wins

always come back to the playoff conversation, but for this year's Ohio State team, the playoffs are only part of the equation.

Throughout the year, the Buckeyes have heard a lot of noise from the outside.

Meyer was suspended, and some thought he should have been fired. The Buckeyes lost to Purdue, and they were written off by many. Ohio State struggled against Nebraska and Maryland – it was just more

of the same, a talented team failing to live up to expectations.

Then there was the rampant speculation about Meyer's health, calling into question his status for next season. For now, though, all of that was pushed to the back for Ohio State, and that's where the statement came in.

"People are going to say what they're going to say," Dixon said, "but at the end of the day you still have to go on that field and play."



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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Frosh Olave Becomes Breakout Star In Romp

Ohio State preached during the week that "legends are made" in The Game. That statement could not have been more true in the case of Chris Olave on Nov. 24 in his first ever game against Michigan.

GAME NOTEBOOK

James Grega

Olave, who stepped in for Austin Mack in the receiver rotation after Mack was likely lost for the season to an injury in the loss to Purdue on Oct. 20, entered the game with just five receptions, but he made two against the Wolverines that Buckeye fans won't soon forget.

The California native caught a pair of 24-yard touchdown passes from sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins to help lead Ohio State to a 62-39 win over Michigan, extending its win streak against the Wolverines to seven.

Olave, a frequent special teams contributor throughout the year, also blocked a punt in the third quarter, which was returned 33 yards for a score by fellow freshman Sevin Banks.

The performance was special for Olave, who said it was the first time all season his parents were able to watch him play in person.

"I just do it for my teammates and the love for my brothers beside me," he said. "And just everything we've been through throughout the season, it's been crazy, so to come out here and contribute to the team is a blessing."

While his touchdown receptions set the tone for the game, it was his punt block that opened the floodgates for what would be a second-half avalanche by the No. 10 team in the nation.

The punt block put Ohio State up two scores, 34-19, and was sandwiched between a Blake Haubeil field goal and a Mike Weber touchdown. The specific block the Buckeyes used to get to punter Will Hart was one that defensive coordinator Greg Schiano installed



JOSH WINSLOW

A LEGEND IS BORN – Freshman wide receiver Chris Olave (17) caught two touchdowns and blocked a punt that was returned for a score vs. U-M.

during the week and one that head coach Urban Meyer wasn't sure would work.

"To tell you the truth, I didn't think we could do it," Meyer said. "Coach Schiano drew that up and (quality control coach) Parker (Fleming) that works with us and I saw it on Wednesday practice," Meyer said. "And I grabbed Parker and I said, you can't – you only have 2.1 seconds to get there. And (Olave's) not that fast."

"And Schiano kept saying, 'We can do it, we can do it.' So I called the block, which is – I shouldn't say – I called the block. See. I've got to change the signal now," Meyer added with a chuckle. "We called the block and we have two blocks, and I thought we were going to go with the other one. And I

hear him go ahead, and I see the signal. And I got really pissed."

Parris Campbell, a fifth-year senior, said he wasn't surprised by Olave's performance, but added he was like a proud older sibling watching Olave's breakout game.

"That is my little brother," Campbell said. "There was a time where every freshman goes through (it). They are homesick, but his resilience showed. Obviously he had a breakout game today. His family was here today to watch him play. He is going to do a lot for this program, and I am excited to watch him in the future."

Meyer concurred with his team captain wide receiver when it came to Olave.

"Buckeye Nation, get used to that one

now," Meyer said. "That's the real deal. He comes from an incredible family, came all the way across the country to be a Buckeye. And you could see right out of the jump when he started practicing, he's got the 'it.'"

OSU Overcomes Penalties, Special Teams Gaffe

For the majority of the season, Ohio State has had issues in a few areas, but two in particular have stood out: penalties and kick returns. Against Michigan, both could have derailed the Buckeyes.

Ohio State committed 12 penalties for 150 yards against Michigan yet defeated the Wolverines to secure its spot in a second straight Big Ten title game and keep its name in contention for a playoff bid.

The Buckeyes took a 21-6 lead with 3:18 to play in the first half against Michigan on a 31-yard touchdown pass from Haskins to Johnnie Dixon, and Ohio State looked in control. The Wolverines, led by quarterback Shea Patterson, marched down the field and scored to bring the game to within one score on a pass to Nico Collins to cap a drive that was aided by a pass-interference call on Ohio State junior cornerback Damon Arnette.

The ensuing kickoff was muffed by Demario McCall and recovered by Michigan on the Ohio State 9-yard line. It took the Wolverines just one play to score, as Patterson found running back Chris Evans on a wheel route, pulling Michigan to within two at 21-19 after a failed two-point conversion.

Dixon, who had a kickoff mistake of his own against Maryland on Nov. 17, said he believes the NCAA's new fair catch rule on kickoffs has confused players from multiple teams across the country, and he attributes that for part of Ohio State's issues in that area.

"I just think the whole fair catch rule is just throwing people off a little bit," he said. "Maybe you don't approach the ball how you would if you didn't know about the fair catch rule. So that rule is a little weird, so it throws you off a little bit."

Ohio State was able to weather the storm

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Game Analysis

by marching 74 yards in 41 seconds to add a Blake Haubeil field goal as time expired in the first half, taking the edge off Michigan's momentum.

Offensive Line Shines, Doesn't Allow A Sack

Much had been made during the week about Michigan's defense, which is led by defensive lineman Chase Winovich. The Wolverines entered the game third in the Big Ten in sacks, and when Winovich – who was questionable to play due to an injury – suited up, it appeared Ohio State's offensive line might be in for a tough challenge.

Instead, the Buckeyes kept Haskins upright for the majority of the game and didn't allow the Wolverines to sack their quarterback once on 31 pass attempts.

"I have to take them out to dinner," Haskins said of his line. "So that's good. But as far as picking up protections, there was no pressures. I really had all day in the pocket. I can't complain. The line did a great job. I'm praying for (Demetrius) Knox, hoping that he's OK. To have a performance like that, try to do it again next week."

Knox left the game late in the fourth quarter on a cart after going down with an injury and did not return. Meyer announced Nov. 25 that the lineman is out for the Big Ten title game with a foot injury. Knox was replaced by redshirt freshman Wyatt Davis late in the win.

Senior right tackle Isaiah Prince, who has consistently come under fire in his career for struggling to pass protect, said it was gratifying for him personally to play well in his final game at Ohio Stadium.

"I thought we played really good today," Prince said. "Obviously there is always room for improvement. We just went out, played as hard as we can and played for each other."

Injuries Mount For Michigan

A handful of Michigan starters on defense were forced to leave the game in the loss to Ohio State, including leading tackler Devin Bush.

While chasing Campbell from behind, Bush fell to the ground on Ohio State's sideline where he stayed for a few moments. He was assisted to the Michigan locker room by a pair of trainers, and head coach Jim Harbaugh said Bush's injury was to the hip.

What Worked Well

The whole offense. In what was arguably Ohio State's best performance all season, the Buckeyes racked up 567 total yards on 396 passing and 171 rushing. Led by sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins, who showed for the second straight week his desire to run, the Buckeyes put Michigan's top-ranked defense on its heels.

Haskins rushed seven times for 34 yards, but he did his damage on 20-of-31 passing (65.0 percent) for 396 yards and six touchdowns to zero interceptions. Haskins spread the ball out between nine receivers, with four different targets scoring. Running backs Mike Weber (13 carries for 96 yards and a touchdown) and J.K. Dobbins (12 carries for 46 yards) combined for 142 yards on 25 totes while fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell caught six passes for 192 yards and two scores.

The Wolverines had no answer for OSU, with credit due to offensive coordinators Ryan Day and Kevin Wilson outcoaching U-M defensive coordinator Don Brown, who is widely regarded as one of the best in the business.

What Didn't Work

The pass defense. Michigan amassed 401 total yards with 240 passing behind a quiet performance, in hindsight, by Shea Patterson. The junior quarterback, who transferred from Ole Miss in the offseason, carved Ohio State for three touchdowns and 187 yards on 20-of-34 (58.8-percent) passing. Backups Joe Milton (2 for 3, 45 yards) and Brandon Peters (1 for 1, 8 yards) rounded out the Wolverines' passing numbers. The Buckeyes

contained the run game with only 161 yards on 40 carries (4.0 average), but Patterson picked on junior cornerback Kendall Sheffield for touchdown strikes of 23 and 12 yards to Nico Collins while U-M was still in striking distance.

Play Of The Game

The blocked punt. After an abysmal end to the first half with Michigan scoring 13 points with less than a minute to go, Ohio State's 24-19 edge at halftime continued to be too close for comfort into the second half. After another red-zone drive stalled for the Buckeyes, sophomore placekicker Blake Haubeil's second field goal – a 19-yarder – gave OSU a 27-19 lead at the 8:25 mark of the third quarter.

On the Wolverines' ensuing possession, Ohio State's defense rose to the occasion and forced a fourth-and-8 for U-M from its own 36-yard line. With Will Hart set to kick away to junior receiver K.J. Hill, OSU lined up eight players across the line of scrimmage and pressured seven. Freshman wide receiver Chris Olave, who hauled in two touchdown passes for 48 yards, was among those seven rushers as he slid inside and burst up the middle for the block near the 25-yard line. The deflection flew toward the sideline, and freshman cornerback Sevn Banks caught the loose ball in stride on his way to a touchdown return.

With the score, Ohio State led 34-19 over Michigan with 4:41 left in the third quarter. Olave's block and Banks' return gave the Buckeyes the spark they needed en route to their 38-point second half, which ultimately catapulted OSU to its 62-39 rout.

– Garrett Stepien

"I don't think it's going to be anything long-term, but it wasn't good for today," he said.

In addition, cornerback David Long suffered a hip injury and tight end Zach Gentry left the game with a concussion after dropping multiple passes in the contest. Quarterback Shea Patterson, who completed 20 of 34 passes for 187 yards and three touchdowns to one interception, was also knocked out of the game late with a right knee contusion, according to a report from MLive.com.

Patterson was briefly spelled by Brandon Peters on what would be a touchdown drive for Michigan as Ben Mason plunged in from the 1-yard line to make the score 48-32 with 9:35 to play in the game. Third-string quarterback Joe Milton finished out the game for the Wolverines and threw an interception on his first pass attempt, which was returned

near the goal line by Ohio State safety Brendon White. Milton later added the final score of the game, a 4-yard touchdown scamper with just 3:16 remaining.

Haskins Breaks More Passing Records

A week prior to The Game, Haskins broke the Ohio State single-season passing records for both yards and touchdowns. Against the Wolverines, Haskins added to his laundry list of accolades.

Haskins' 20-of-31 clip for 396 yards and six touchdowns put him at 4,081 passing yards for the year, a new Big Ten single-season record. He passed former Purdue quarterback Curtis Painter on the list. Painter threw for 3,985 yards in 2006 for the Boilermakers.

The Potomac, Md., product passed another former Boilermaker for the single-season

conference record for most touchdown passes, besting Drew Brees. The current New Orleans Saint threw 39 touchdown passes in 1999. Haskins is now up to 42 with at least two more games to play.

"I want to be one of the best to ever do it when I get done playing here at this university," Haskins said. "And this is a dream come true for me. I have no words to say about, like, all we've done this year. It's been a dream of mine to play here at the university for a while."

"And to break all these records and to go win these games the way we've won these games is a blessing. And (we're) going to put on a show next week."

In addition to the program season records for yards and touchdowns, Haskins holds the Ohio State single-season marks for completions (314), attempts (455), completion percentage (69.0) and total yards (4,208).



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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Buckeyes Blast Wolverines In Historic Victory

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State was a rare underdog at home, but by the time fans stormed the Ohio Stadium field at 4:08 p.m. on Nov. 24, the Buckeyes were once again the top dog in their rivalry with Michigan.

Dwayne Haskins threw six touchdowns, and true freshman Chris Olave caught two of them and had a critical punt block in the third quarter to lead No. 10 Ohio State to a 62-39 victory over No. 4 Michigan for a seventh straight win in the series.

The Buckeyes (11-1, 8-1 Big Ten) will play West Division winner Northwestern in the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 1 in Indianapolis.

Never had OSU scored more points against its bitter rival in the 115-year history of the series.

It was the most points Michigan has ever allowed in regulation, breaking the 58 scored by Cornell in 1891. The only time U-M (10-2, 8-1) had allowed more points was a 67-65 victory in triple overtime vs. Illinois in 2010.

Olave's block was returned by freshman Sevyn Banks for a 33-yard touchdown to make it 34-19 in the third quarter. Later, after a Michigan TD made it 41-25, fifth-year senior Parris Campbell immediately took a jet sweep for a 78-yard score for a 48-25 margin before 106,588 on a cloudy, 48-degree day that began with rain and saw wisps of sunshine by game's end.

Ohio State torched the nation's top-ranked defense for 567 total yards (396 passing, 171 rushing).

"Our goal as an offense is always to score as much as we can," Campbell said. "Obviously, we knew they were the No. 1 defense. But watching film all week, we saw advantages."

OSU has won 14 of the last 15 and 16 of 18 in the series, and the Wolverines have lost eight straight in Columbus since 2000.

Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh is 0-4 vs. OSU while Urban Meyer is 7-0 vs. the Wolverines.

Haskins was 20 of 31 for 396 yards. He has 42 touchdowns passes to break Drew Brees'



JOSH WINSLOW

KEY PLAYER – Michigan native Mike Weber rushed for 96 yards and a touchdown for Ohio State against the Wolverines.

(Purdue) single-season mark of 39. Haskins also owns the season pass yardage record in the conference. He sits at 4,081 to break the record of Curtis Painter (Purdue), who had 3,985 in 2006.

Campbell had six catches for 192 yards and two touchdowns. Junior K.J. Hill had four catches for 51 yards and a score, and Olave caught two passes for 48 yards and the pair of scores. Junior Mike Weber, a Michigan native and one-time Michigan commit, rushed for 96 yards and a TD on 13 carries.

Michigan quarterback Shea Patterson was 20 of 34 for 187 yards, three TDs and an interception. Nico Collins had four catches for 91 yards and two TDs for Michigan, which had 401 total yards (240 passing, 161 rushing). Running back Karan Higdon, who seemed to guarantee a victory for U-M, had 72 yards on 15 carries.

The game was full of penalties and momentum shifts.

OSU was penalized 12 times for 150 yards; Michigan was flagged seven times for 72 yards.

Ohio State threatened to blow the game open on the third Haskins TD, 31 yards to Johnnie Dixon, for a 21-6 lead with 3:18 left in the first half.

But Michigan stunned the Buckeyes with two TDs in six seconds with under a minute to go and trailed 21-19 at the break after sophomore Blake Haubeil's 19-yard field goal on the last play of the half made it 24-19.

Then the second-half onslaught began.

How It Happened

OSU took a 7-0 lead on its first possession at 11:29 of the first quarter.

The Buckeyes forced a three-and-out to start the game, and Hill returned the 55-yard punt by Will Hart 23 yards to the OSU 43. Haskins ran for nine and Dobbins two for the first down.

Haskins hit Campbell for 16 yards across the middle to the Michigan 30. After a false start on fifth-year senior right guard Demetrius Knox moved the ball back to the 35, sophomore Demario McCall had an 11-yard grab followed by an incomplete pass to Hill. Haskins then found Olave on a crossing route, and he scored from 24 yards for his first career TD on a drive that took six plays and went 57 yards in 1:57.

Michigan made it 7-3 with 6:22 left in the first on a 39-yard field goal by Jake Moody on a 10-play, 44-yard march.

The Wolverines then made it 7-6 at 14:51 of the second quarter on another long drive that was aided by pass interference on junior cornerback Damon Arnette that moved the ball to the OSU 38. After 12 plays, 52 yards and 5:41 off the clock, however, the drive stalled at the Buckeye 13, setting up the field goal.

On third-and-6 from the 13, sophomore linebacker Pete Werner made a TD-saving breakup on a pass to Zach Gentry, and Moody made the 31-yard field goal.

Haskins and Olave did a repeat performance with a second 24-yard TD with 9:08 left in the first half to put Ohio State ahead 14-6. The nine-play, 80-yard drive that took 2:59 got a jump when sophomore tight end Luke Farrell gained 5 yards on third down to keep possession at the OSU 34. Big plays also included a 12-yard catch by Terry McLaurin and a 27-yard catch-and-run by Hill to the Michigan 28.

Haskins threw his third touchdown pass of the first half for a 21-6 lead with 3:18 to go when the Wolverines blew coverage and senior Johnnie Dixon was open by 15 yards to score from 31 yards out.

At the start of the drive, the Buckeyes faced dire straits when Meyer was called for an unsportsmanlike conduct when he protested a non-call on a high hit to a sliding Haskins.

On the next play, facing third-and-17 from their own 14, the Buckeyes got a break when Michigan was called for pass interference, setting up a first down at the 29. On second down, Haskins tossed a screen to Campbell and he juked his way for 33 yards to the Michigan 42. Three plays later, the Buckeyes scored to finish the eight-play, 79-yard drive using 3:54.

The game was all Ohio State's before the stunning turnaround.

Michigan also drove 79 yards in eight plays in 2:29. Once again an Arnette pass interference on third-and-9 from the U-M 47 moved the chains to the OSU 38. Patterson scrambled 15 yards to the 23 before the deep ball to Nico Collins made it 21-13 with 47 seconds left.

On the kickoff, McCall signaled for the fair catch near the goal line but fumbled, and Nate Schoenle recovered for the Wolverines

at the 9. On the next play, Chris Evans had a 9-yard TD grab with 41 seconds left. The two-point try failed when junior defensive end Jonathon Cooper tackled Patterson in the backfield.

OSU got the ball back at the 25. The Wolverines committed three penalties for 30 yards (holding, pass interference and illegal substitution). Haskins found McCall for 33 yards to the U-M 3 with 15 seconds left.

Weber had a 1-yard catch, and backup QB Tate Martell entered and gained a yard to the 1. Haskins returned and threw incomplete to Victor at the pylon, prompting a 19-yard field goal by Haubeil as time expired for the 24-19 lead.

Ohio State's second series of the third quarter started at its 42 after a three-and-out and a punt. Dobbins had four carries for 22 yards before Campbell caught a Haskins throw at the 32 and ran to the 5 for a 31-yard gain.

Martell came in again and got the same result as the end of the second quarter. He rushed for zero, Dobbins got three then nothing, and Haubeil kicked a 19-yard field goal with 8:25 left in the third.

The Wolverines committed a kickoff miscue of their own when Ambry Thomas stepped out of bounds at the U-M 8. The defense held, and it resulted in the Buckeyes taking a 34-19 lead with 4:41 to go in the third. After Michigan was stopped at its 36, Olave burst through the middle and blocked the punt. Banks picked it out of midair at the 33 and ran it in.

Michigan turned it over again on its next series when Patterson was intercepted by junior safety Jordan Fuller, giving Ohio State the ball at the Wolverine 22. Hill's reception pushed the ball to the 2, and Weber took a pitch by Haskins and made it 41-19 with 3:10 left in the third.

Michigan made it 41-25 with 14:11 left in the game, going 75 yards in 3:59 and eight plays in a drive that ended with Patterson's 12-yard TD to Collins. Patterson had passes of 20 and 13 yards, and the Buckeyes were flagged with another pass interference call, this one on junior cornerback Kendall Sheffield. The two-point try failed.

On the first play from scrimmage on the following possession, Campbell took a push pass from Haskins at the OSU 22 and burst around the right end for a 48-25 lead with 13:35 left.

Michigan responded with an 86-yard drive that consumed 11 plays and 4:13 to pull to within 48-32. Higdon had a 24-yard run, and Fuller gave U-M 15 more yards on a pass interference infraction.

Patterson got hurt, and backup Brandon Peters on his first play hit Evans for 8 yards to the 1. Ben Mason ran for the score from there.

Back came the Buckeyes with Haskins running for 11 and Weber another 29. A face-mask call against U-M on the play moved the ball to the Wolverine 13. Three plays later Haskins connected with Hill on a 1-yard TD for a 55-32 led with 6:59 left. The drive was six plays, 75 yards and 2:36 off the clock.

Campbell had a 16-yard TD catch from Haskins with 5:26 to go after U-M backup Joe Milton was intercepted by Brendon White and returned to the U-M 4. After an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on Fuller moved the ball back to the 19, OSU went the distance in three plays in 1:16 to make it 62-32.

Milton rushed for a score with 3:16 left at the end of a 75-yard drive that used six plays and 2:10. That brought the game to its final 62-39 count.

OSU marched 41 more yards to the U-M 7 before ending the game at the Michigan 10 after two victory formation kneels.

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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 62, Michigan 39

Nov. 24, 2018 – Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
MICHIGAN (10-2, 8-1 BIG TEN)	3	16	0	20	39
OHIO STATE (11-1, 8-1 BIG TEN)	7	17	17	21	62

First Quarter

OSU – Olave, 24 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 11:29; 6 plays, 57 yards, 1:57 TOP.
MICH – Moody, 39 yard field goal, 6:22; 10 plays, 44 yards, 5:00 TOP.

Second Quarter

MICH – Moody, 31 yard field goal, 14:51; 12 plays, 52 yards, 5:41 TOP.
OSU – Olave, 24 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 9:08; 9 plays, 80 yards, 2:59 TOP.
OSU – Dixon, 31 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 3:18; 8 plays, 79 yards, 3:54 TOP.
MICH – Collins, 23 yard pass from Patterson (Moody kick), 0:47; 8 plays, 79 yards, 2:29 TOP.
MICH – Evans, 9 yard pass from Patterson (Patterson pass failed), 0:41; 1 play, 9 yards, 0:04 TOP.
OSU – Haubeil, 19 yard field goal, 0:00; 7 plays, 74 yards, 0:41 TOP.

Third Quarter

OSU – Haubeil, 19 yard field goal, 8:25; 9 plays, 56 yards, 3:45 TOP.
OSU – Banks, 33 yard blocked punt return (Haubeil kick), 4:41.
OSU – Weber, 2 yard run (Haubeil kick), 3:10; 2 plays, 22 yards, 0:35 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

MICH – Collins, 12 yard pass from Patterson (Patterson pass failed), 14:11; 8 plays, 75 yards, 3:59 TOP.

OSU – Campbell, 78 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 13:55; 1 play, 78 yards, 0:11 TOP.
MICH – Mason, 1 yard run (Moody kick), 9:35; 11 plays, 86 yards, 4:13 TOP.
OSU – Hill, 1 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 6:59; 6 plays, 75 yards, 2:36 TOP.
OSU – Campbell, 16 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 5:26; 3 plays, 19 yards, 1:16 TOP.
MICH – Milton, 4 yard run (Moody kick), 3:16; 6 plays, 75 yards, 2:10 TOP.

Att. – 106,588.

Weather – 48 degrees, cloudy; wind 11 mph.

Team Statistics

	MICH	OSU
First Downs	28	28
Rushing	10	9
Passing	12	15
Penalty	6	4
Rushes-Yards	40-161	36-171
Passing Yards	240	396
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	23-38-2	20-31-0
Offensive Plays	78	67
Total Net Yards	401	567
Third Down Efficiency	6-14	5-11
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-0
Punts-Avg.	5-35.8	30-40.3
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties	7-72	12-150
Time of Possession	35:24	24:36

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **MICH**: Higdon 15-72; Evans 8-33; Wilson 7-32; Patterson 6-13; Mason 3-7; Milton 1-4. **OSU**: Weber 13-96; Dobbins 12-46; Haskins 7-34; Martell 2-1; TEAM 2-(-6).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **MICH**: Patterson 20-34-1-187-3; Milton 2-3-1-45-0; Peters 1-1-0-8-0. **OSU**: Haskins 20-31-0-396-6.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **MICH**: Peoples-Jones 7-64; Collins 4-91; Evans 3-25; Bell 2-19; McKeon 2-13; Eubanks 2-8; Black 1-15; Martin 1-4; Higdon 1-1. **OSU**: Campbell 6-192; Hill 4-51; Olave 2-48; McCall 2-44; Farrell 2-16; Dixon 1-31; McLaurin 1-12; Dobbins 1-1; Weber 1-1.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **MICH**: Hart 4-44.8-55; TEAM 1-0-0-0. **OSU**: Chrisman 3-40-3-46.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **MICH**: None. **OSU**: Hill 2-29; Banks 1-33; Olave 0-3.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **MICH**: Thomas 6-87. **OSU**: McCall 2-22.

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

FORCED FUMBLES – **MICH**: None. **OSU**: None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – **MICH**: Schoenle 1-0. **OSU**: None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **MICH**: None. **OSU**: White 1-49; Fuller 1-4.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **MICH**: Gary 1-0-4; Kinnel 1-0-1; Ross 1-0-1; Winovich 1-0-1. **OSU**: Harrison 2-0-12; Landers 1-0-6; Cooper 1-0-3; Young 1-0-2.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – **MICH**: None. **OSU**: Harrison 1-0-7; Landers 1-0-6; Cooper 1-0-3.

TACKLES (Solo-Assst.-Tot.) – **MICH**: Kinnel 4-4-8; Ross 4-3-7; Bush 3-3-6; Metellus 4-1-5; Gary 3-2-5; Furbush 4-0-4; Gil 2-2-4; Winovich 1-3-4; Paye 3-0-3; Kemp 1-2-3; Hudson 1-2-3; Watson 1-2-3; McKeon 1-0-1; Hart 1-0-1; Glasgow 1-0-1; Mason 1-0-1; Hill 1-0-1; Milton 1-0-1; Hutchinson 0-1-1; Woods 0-1-1. **OSU**: Borland 4-6-10; Fuller 5-3-8; Harrison 5-2-7; Werner 2-4-6; White 1-4-5; Arnette 3-1-4; Sheffield 2-2-4; Hamilton 1-3-4; Landers 1-3-4; Cooper 3-0-3; Hilliard 2-0-2; D. Jones 2-0-2; Young 2-0-2; Wade 2-0-2; Okudah 1-1-2; Booker 1-1-2; Haubeil 1-0-1; Pryor 1-0-1; Wint 1-0-1; T. Smith 0-1-1; Cornell 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **MICHIGAN**: Offense, Runyan, Bredeson, Ruiz, Onwenu, Stueber, Eubanks, Gentry, Collins, Peoples-Jones, Patterson, Higdon, Moody. Defense, Winovich, Kemp, Dwumfour, Gary, Hudson, Bush, Gil, Long, Metellus, Kinnel, Hill, Hart. Reserves, Ross, Thomas, Paye, Hawkins, Nordin, Milton, Wangler, Uche, Black, Bell, Evans, Wilson, Kelly-Powell, Peters, White, Woods, Hewlett, Watson, Glasgow, Cochran, Cheeseman, Anthony, Mason, McCurry, Bush, Robinson, Furbush, Spanellis, Martin, Schoenle, McKeon, Perry, Mone, Marshall, Hutchinson. **OHIO STATE**: Offense, Munford, Pridgeon, Jordan, Knox, Prince, Farrell, Haskins, Dobbins, Campbell, McLaurin, Dixon, Haubeil. Defense, Young, Landers, D. Jones, Cooper, Harrison, Borland, Werner, Sheffield, White, Fuller, Arnette, Chrisman. Reserves, Gant, Okudah, Martell, T. Smith, Hill, Proctor, Davis, Browning, Vincent, Mitchell, Cornell, Victor, Riep, Banks, Berry, Pryor, Harris, K. Jones, Olave, Wint, Wade, Weber, McCall, Hilliard, McCullough, Booker, Hamilton, Friday, Alabi, Cupp, Woidke, Myers, Togiai, Saunders, Hausmann, L. Smith, Gardiner, Ruckert, Garrett.

Season Statistics

Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Sept. 1	(5) OREGON STATE	W, 77-31	102,169
Sept. 8	(4) RUTGERS	W, 52-3	93,057
Sept. 15	(4) vs. TCU* (15)	W, 40-28	64,362
Sept. 22	(4) TULANE	W, 49-6	103,336
Sept. 29	(4) at Penn State (9)	W, 27-26	110,889
Oct. 6	(3) INDIANA	W, 49-26	104,193
Oct. 13	(3) MINNESOTA	W, 30-14	100,042
Oct. 20	(2) at Purdue	L, 49-20	60,716
Nov. 3	(10) NEBRASKA	W, 36-31	104,245
Nov. 10	(10) at Mich. St. (18)	W, 26-6	74,633
Nov. 17	(10) at Maryland	W, 52-51 (OT)	38,177
Nov. 24	(10) MICHIGAN (4)	W, 62-39	106,588
Dec. 1	Big Ten Title Game**	8 p.m.	-

OSU's CFP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name. AP ranking used through Purdue game.

* – At AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

** – Vs. Northwestern at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Team Statistics	OSU	Opp
First Downs	350	236
Rushing	123	88
Passing	192	117
Penalty	35	31
Average Per Game/Rush	181.4	164.9
Average Per Game/Pass	362.5	237.6
Total Offense	6,571	4,830
Total Plays	975	820
Average Per Game	547.6	402.5
Average Per Play	6.7	5.9
Penalties-Yards	98-912	72-720
Fumbles-Lost	16-8	23-11
Third Down Efficiency	81-173	53-169
Percentage	47%	31%
Fourth Down Efficiency	13-20	8-15
Percentage	65%	53%
Sacks-Yards	34-226	16-75
Time Of Possession Avg.	30:57	29:03

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	109	142	104	158	7	520	43.3
Opponents	61	101	57	85	6	310	25.8

Rushing	Individual Statistics	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
J.K. Dobbins	206	961	4.7	8	42	
Mike Weber	140	807	5.8	5	49	
Tate Martell	22	128	5.8	2	47	
Dwayne Haskins	63	127	2.0	4	17	
Master Teague	17	106	6.2	1	33	
Demario McCall	6	38	6.3	0	15	
Brian Snead	11	37	3.4	1	5	
Parris Campbell	9	24	2.7	0	18	
C.J. Saunders	0	8	0.0	0	0	
K.J. Hill	1	-3	-3.0	0	0	
TEAM	17	-56	-3.3	0	0	
OSU Totals	492	2,177	4.4	21	49	
OPP Totals	430	1,979	4.6	22	97	

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Eff.
D. Haskins	314	455	69.0	4,081	42-7	171.74
Tate Martell	23	28	82.1	269	1-0	174.63
OSU Totals	337	483	69.8	4,350	43-7	171.90
OPP Totals	209	390	53.6	2,851	16-9	123.92

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Parris Campbell	72	903	12.5	11	78
K.J. Hill	66	823	12.5	6	42
Johnnie Dixon	33	513	15.5	6	44
Terry McLaurin	31	591	19.1	9	75
Austin Mack	26	331	12.7	1	48
J.K. Dobbins	19	198	10.4	1	35
Luke Farrell	19	196	10.3	1	24
Binjimen Victor	17	287	16.9	4	47
Mike Weber	17	83	4.9	1	15
C.J. Saunders	10	73	7.3	0	19
Demario McCall	8	102	12.8	0	35
Chris Olave	7	118	16.9	2	25
Rashod Berry	7	73	10.4	1	15
Jaylen Harris	2	22	11.0	0	15
Garyn Prater	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jeremy Ruckert	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jaelen Gill	1	11	11.0	0	11
OSU Totals	337	4,350	12.9	43	78
OPP Totals	209	2,851	13.6	16	93

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Parris Campbell	11	-	-	-	-	66
J.K. Dobbins	9	-	-	-	-	54
Blake Haubeil	-	27-27	-	-	9-11	54
Terry McLaurin	9	-	-	-	-	54
S. Nuernberger	-	39-39	-	-	3-5	48
Johnnie Dixon	6	-	-	-	-	36
K.J. Hill	6	-	-	-	-	36
Mike Weber	6	-	-	-	-	36
Dwayne Haskins	4	-	0-1	0-2	-	24
Binjimen Victor	4	-	-	-	-	24
Dre'Mont Jones	2	-	-	-	-	12
Tate Martell	2	-	-	-	-	12
Chris Olave	2	-	-	-	-	12
Sevyn Banks	1	-	-	-	-	6
Rashod Berry	1	-	-	-	-	6
Nick Bosa	1	-	-	-	-	6
Luke Farrell	1	-	-	-	-	6
Davon Hamilton	1	-	-	-	-	6
Austin Mack	1	-	-	-	-	6
Brian Snead	1	-	-	-	-	6
Master Teague	1	-	-	-	-	6
Keandre Jones (1 safety)	-	-	-	-	-	2
TEAM (1 safety)	-	-	-	-	-	2
OSU Totals	69	66-66	0-1	0-2	12-16	520
OPP Totals	40	34-35	0-1	0-4	12-20	310

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
S. Nuernberger	2-2	1-2	0-1	0-0	3-5
Blake Haubeil	6-6	2-3	1-2	0-0	9-11
OSU Totals	8-8	3-3	1-3	0-0	12-16
OPP Totals	2-2	8-10	2-6	0-2	12-20

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Drue Chrisman	49	2,073	42.3	0	65
OSU Totals	49	2,073	42.3	0	65
OPP Totals	73	2,862	39.2	3	56

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Shaun Wade	2	12	6.0	0	12
Kendall Sheffield	2	0	0.0	0	0
Brendon White	1	49	49.0	0	49
Dre'Mont Jones	1	28	28.0	1	28
Malik Harrison	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jordan Fuller	1	4	4.0	0	4
Isaiah Pryor	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	9	106	11.8	1	49
OPP Totals	7	211	30.1	2	46

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
K.J. Hill	12	67	5.6	0	23
C.J. Saunders	8	50	6.2	0	20
Demario McCall	3	32	10.7	0	26
Sevyn Banks	1	33	33.0	1	33
Keandre Jones	1	22	22.0	0	0
Chris Olave	0	3	0.0	0	3
OSU Totals	25	207	8.3	1	33
OPP Totals	9	34	3.8	0	12

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Johnnie Dixon	13	240	18.5	0	38
Demario McCall	8	152	19.0	0	42
C.J. Saunders	2	24	12.0	0	14
K.J. Hill	1	4	4.0	0	4
OSU Totals	24	420	17.5	0	42
OPP Totals	31	472	15.2	0	31

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Malik Harrison	42	22	64	8.5-31	2.5-17
Jordan Fuller	46	17	63	1.5-2	-
Tuf Borland	28	30	58	9.0-29	3.0-16
Pete Werner	36	17	53	7.5-20	3.0-10
Dre'Mont Jones	21	15	36	12.0-63	7.5-55
Damon Arnette	25	8	33	-	-
Brendon White	15	18	33	2.0-6	-
Isaiah Pryor	19	11	30	1.0-1	-
Chase Young	20	9	29	11.5-61	6.5-49
Kendall Sheffield	22	7	29	2.0-4	-
Jahsen Wint	21	5	26	0.5-1	-
Jeffrey Okudah	19	7	26	-	-
Shaun Wade	22	3	25	-	-
Baron Browning	11	11	22	3.5-11	1.0-6
Justin Hilliard	14	6	20	1.0-7	-
Robert Landers	10	10	20	4.0-15	1.0-6
Jonathon Cooper	9	11	20	53.5-16	2.5-9
OSU Totals	452	256	708	85-349	34-226
OPP Totals	549	414	963	55-155	16-75
Fumbles Forced: 10 – Tuf Borland 2, Pete Werner 2, Nick Bosa, Dwayne Haskins, Dre'Mont Jones, Kendall Sheffield, Shaun Wade, Chase Young.					
Fumbles Recovered: 11 – Dre'Mont Jones 3, Nick Bosa 2, Jonathon Cooper, Jordan Fuller, Davon Hamilton, Malik Harrison, Jeffrey Okudah, TEAM.					

OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 62, Michigan 39

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on the crowd in Ohio Stadium: "We asked them at the Skull Session, 'When I need you the most, would you give us your very best?' And our fans and student body who we love just gave us their very best."

OSU sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins on the postgame celebration: "All the fans just flooded the field, and it shows how much love that this football team gets from this university. And just really a great win. And we played great and looking forward to next week."

Haskins on his motivation for The Game: "I mean, we didn't need the underdog score point. We didn't need the 'revenge tour.' We didn't need the guaranteed win. We know what this game means to our school, to our teammates and to our coaches."

OSU senior right tackle Isaiah Prince on the importance of keeping the Buckeyes' streak against U-M going on Senior Day: "To be honest, that was the only thing I cared about. I prayed before the game. I said, 'I don't care what happens as long as we win.' For it to happen on my Senior Day made me the happiest person."

Meyer on whether he expected an offensive performance of that caliber from the Buckeyes: "Just great players and a really good offensive staff, and that's how you do what you did. Did we see that? No, no. The guys just went out and played."

Haskins on facing Michigan's top-ranked defense: "I was licking my chops. I see the one-high covers and that's a quarterback's dream. The biggest responsibility for me all week was to be able to pick up blitzes and protection, because we saw a lot of different fronts and exotic looks. I spent hours in the film room just trying to figure out how we can pick the blitzes up. And once we picked it up, receivers make plays, and I'm going to put it there. And it was just a great overall team effort today."

OSU junior Malik Harrison when asked how important it was for the linebackers to have a big game: "It was real important, especially playing The Team Up North. Everybody – me, Tuf (Borland), (Dante Booker), Pete (Werner), we just came with our 'A' game."

OSU junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones on the defense: "We work really hard at practice from Sunday to Friday just going over, understanding our game plan, going over signals that we need to know and then to come out and see how we handled this team is just a crazy feeling. It kind of feels like all your hard work has been accomplished."

Harrison on having his best game in his hometown: "It makes it even more special. My family in the stands, we were always Buckeye fans growing up. So it was just being able to play my best game against The Team Up North – it was great."

Meyer on where this game ranks among his seven wins against Michigan: "I'm not going to short-change any of those other efforts that we've had. But the team we beat today was very good. It was a very, very good team with excellent players all over the field. And so where does that rank? I don't know. But I know the team we beat, that's a heck of a team we beat."

Meyer on the next steps for his team: "They celebrate the right way with their families, do the right things. And then they come back tomorrow and they accept their next mission assignment directive. And that's a big one. That's in Indianapolis."

OSU fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon on what's next for the Buckeyes: "For us, we always think we can do better, we always think we can do better. So I still don't think we're at the best level we can but, it's better. We're moving in the right direction."

Prince, when asked if he felt OSU made a statement for the College Football Playoff committee: "Yeah, I think we made a statement. That was a pretty good defense we played against today. There is always room for improvement. We played hard for one another."

OSU fifth-year senior receiver Parris Campbell on whether the Buckeyes' goals are still in reach: "Definitely. Everything is still in front of us. We'll celebrate this win, get back to work next week and get better to beat Northwestern."

Dixon on his Senior Day emotions: "I knew it was going to be emotional. I thought Senior Tackle was going to be the day for me, but it wasn't. I knew coming in and knowing this was my last time playing in front of the fans, it kind of hit me."

"It hit me starting in our pregame video we watched today. I kind of shed a tear in there because it was just so emotional."

Dixon on freshman wide receiver Chris Olave: "I told you guys right after camp, I told y'all. I don't know if you all took me seriously or not, but the kid is the truth. He can play ball. I haven't seen a freshman come in like that, ever."

Olave, when asked if the performance was more than a dream: "Definitely. I kind of dreamed for this my whole life, and actually being put in the spotlight is unreal. So I thank my teammates and coaches and every-

body."

Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh on OSU: "Well, they played great, their third quarter especially. They ran a lot of speed plays that got out on the perimeter and got loose. We also set them up in good field position with a couple turnovers, and of course the blocked punt, which contributed to the score as well."

Harbaugh on how he expects his team to respond: "We'll come back motivated and make darn sure it doesn't happen again."

Dwayne Haskins

Chris Olave

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Columnists Give Their Takes On 'The Game'

By JOE DEMPSEY
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Entering the 2018 edition of The Game, Ohio State was coming off an emotional overtime victory at Maryland and was widely perceived as the underdog against Michigan and its top-ranked defense. The Buckeyes had a different narrative in mind, continuing their dominance over their rivals with a convincing 62-39 beatdown.

The Scarlet and Gray have now won the last seven matchups with the Maize and Blue and 16 of the last 18 altogether. Ohio State improved to 7-0 against its archnemesis with Urban Meyer as its leader. Meanwhile, Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh slid to 0-4 against the Buckeyes and has received heat for his shortcomings after having received praise most of the season.

Michigan came to Columbus as the No. 4 team in the country, needing a win against Ohio State and a follow-up victory in the Big Ten Championship Game to secure a spot in the College Football Playoff for the first time. Ohio State came into The Game poised to show it remains atop the Big Ten and among the nation's best.

The following is a collection of opinions from columnists in Ohio, Michigan and beyond regarding what transpired in the latest showdown in the 'Shoe between longtime rivals and its consequential impact.

• **Dave Briggs, Toledo Blade:** "If Harbaugh famously held his hands inches apart to show the difference between victory and defeat two years ago – recall his take on The Spot – you would have needed a canyon, an ocean, and a lake to be named later to illustrate the talent and coaching divide between the teams Saturday.

"This was a name-the-score offense and a big-play defense – OK, a good-enough defense – reintroducing the Buckeyes into the playoff race and Michigan's top-rated D proving the biggest fraud since Bernie Madoff. (Frankly, I'm not sure coordinator Don 'Dr. Blitz' Brown is a real doctor.)"

• **Pat Caputo, Oakland (Mich.) Press:** "Buckeyes QB Dwayne Haskins chewed up and spit out Michigan's defense to the tune of nearly 600 yards in collective OSU offense. The Wolverines were fortunate it was this close. And please, can this state stop getting ahead of itself when it comes to the Wolverines? Can we please allow Michigan to win something before crowning the Wolverines anything other than an enigma, which can't get over the top despite resources suggesting they should be among college football's elite? Because Michigan clearly is not. Ohio State showed exactly why Saturday."

• **Paul Finebaum, ESPN:** "We're four years in now and if you couldn't beat this Ohio State team with Urban Meyer, ... you're not going to beat them. If you're a Michigan fan, just accept the fact that we're going to lose to Ohio State every year as long as Urban Meyer is there. As bad as Urban Meyer has been this year, this has been the worst season we've seen in Urban Meyer since his last season at Florida in 2010, all of the pressure. And he can still put a game plan together to make Jim Harbaugh look like an idiot yesterday, then he might as well throw in the towel."

• **Isaiah Hole, Wolverines Wire:** "Problems still persist with the program, assuredly, but unless they're so deeply-rooted in

some kind of mental inferiority complex vs. the Buckeyes, they are solvable. It's more likely that this Michigan team saw the tale of the tape heading into Saturday and felt too confident for its own good, whereas Ohio State – who has very, very rarely been the underdog since Meyer arrived in Columbus – took exception, and finally let its talent shine through. Michigan is still accumulating talent, but so too, unfortunately, are the Buckeyes. The disparity is lessening, and in years before this one, the Wolverines still managed to play OSU tight. As the memories get erased by the upperclassmen who don't know anything different than losing to its arch rival, those newer, highly-touted recruits will arrive and take on the challenge with a bravado of their own."

• **Doug Lesmerises, Cleveland.com:** "This was the best Michigan team Harbaugh could offer, on a 10-game winning streak, with a capable quarterback in Shea Patterson, a wise defensive coordinator in Don Brown, an improved offensive line and the No. 1 ranked defense in the nation. Michigan at its best? An Ohio State team that spent the season frustrating itself and its fans handled that best for 60 minutes. The Buckeyes have accrued more talent than Michigan for more than a decade, winning by force and as expected. Ohio State had won six straight because it was favored in six straight. "This was different. This was peak Michigan and Ohio State maybe on the ropes, the Buckeyes in as much disarray as a 10-win team could be in.

"To win this will lead to a single question for the Wolverines – what else can they do?"

• **Rob Oller, Columbus Dispatch:** "Let's talk playoff possibilities. I'm not one to think a 180-degree reversal is in order based on one impressive win. Translated: If you were 100 percent certain the Buckeyes were not deserving of a playoff spot before beating Michigan, it's disingenuous to now claim with 100 percent certainty that OSU now is in. I see the Buckeyes jumping from the 10th spot to sixth, passing No. 4 Michigan, No. 7 LSU, No. 8 Washington State and No. 9 Central Florida. But passing No. 6 Oklahoma is going to be difficult, if the Sooners get their revenge on Texas (their only loss) in

the Big 12 championship game. I asked Ohio State H-back Parris Campbell if the Buckeyes deserve one of the four spots. 'We just beat the No. 4 team, so definitely.' I think Ohio State still needs help."

• **Jeff Seidel, Detroit Free Press:** "As Harbaugh said, this is the game Michigan will think about for the next 365 days.

"And they will remember one thing: Ohio State's domination. And the blame starts with Harbaugh. To me, that makes it a failure of a season. This is beyond blowing an opportunity. The Wolverines might have taken two steps forward this season, but they just did a face plant backward. Give Meyer credit. Clearly, he has a health issue. At one point, he was huddled over the sideline. But he owns Harbaugh.

"This felt bigger than a blown opportunity. This was an entire game, exploding in your face.

In the wake of this game, there is a massive question: If not this year, then when? If not with this team and this quarterback and this massive opportunity, then when? Michigan might have only one hope to get this turned around: Urban Meyer stepping down. Because after four years, we know one thing: Harbaugh hasn't found a way to beat him."

• **Pete Thamel, Yahoo Sports:** "For all the bluster and consternation, all the viral comments and bizarre indulgences, Jim Harbaugh's tenure at Michigan remains college football's annual \$7 million tease. There's a distinct pattern that's unfurled over his four years – optimism, followed by empirical evidence that derives hope and then persistent failure when the games matter the most. There's all thunder and no delivery for Jim Harbaugh at Michigan, all chirping and no championships."




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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Championship Goals Are Alive For Ohio State

By JAMES GREGA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

One of the many focuses for Ohio State since Urban Meyer arrived on campus has been getting his team ready to compete for championships in November.

In every one of his seasons outside of 2012 (bowl ban), Ohio State has had a chance to do just that, and with a 62-39 win over Michigan on Nov. 24, the Buckeyes not only put themselves in the Big Ten title game for the fourth time in six years, they also re-entered the College Football Playoff discussion.

"We played well, so we've got to do it again vs. Northwestern next week and let the committee make a decision from there," quarterback Dwayne Haskins said after defeating the Wolverines. "But we're going to keep putting good stuff out there on film and keep getting better. And I feel like we can still get better. We haven't played our best game yet. So there's a ways to go for us."

Before Ohio State can officially throw its hat in the ring for the playoff, it has to defeat Big Ten West champion Northwestern, which enters the game with an 8-4 record. The Wildcats lost all three of their nonconference games in 2018, falling to Duke 21-7 and No. 3 Notre Dame 31-21 in addition to an upset at the hands of Akron at home, 39-34, in September.

The last time Ohio State and Northwestern played, the Buckeyes came away with a



JOSH WINSLOW

ON TRACK – Sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins has led Ohio State to an 11-1 record and a berth in the Big Ten title game.

24-20 win at Ohio Stadium in 2016. The two teams also matched up in 2013, with the Buckeyes surviving a 40-30 contest in

Evanston, Ill., against a 16th-ranked Wildcat team in prime time.

This matchup between Ohio State and Northwestern will be one of the most hyped in the history of the Wildcat program, with a Rose Bowl bid on the line for Pat Fitzgerald's team and the CFP still within reach for the Buckeyes. The Wildcats have never before appeared in the Big Ten title game, and they last won a conference title in 2000.

Meyer said he has plenty of respect for the Wildcats and added that his team will have to play its best game in order to capture another Big Ten title.

"I think they're awesome," Meyer said. "I'm a big fan of – Pat's one of my very closest friends. I have just great respect for him."

Fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell echoed his head coach's comments, adding that Northwestern's toughness is what makes the Wildcats difficult opponents.

"I think they are a bunch of tough guys," Campbell said. "I have watched them this season, and they are a team that is not going to quit and that is not going to give up. We definitely have our work cut out for us because they pride themselves on toughness."

Meyer's Ohio State teams are 2-1 in the Big Ten title game, defeating Wisconsin in 2014 and 2017 and falling to Michigan State in 2013. As the head coach at Florida, Meyer was also 2-1 in conference championship games, defeating Arkansas, 38-28, in 2006 and Alabama, 31-20, in 2008 before falling to the Crimson Tide a year later, 32-13.

Much like at Ohio State, all of those games came after wins over a rival, in that case Florida State. Meyer said he isn't concerned about an emotional letdown after defeating Michigan once again because his players are well aware of what is still in front of them.

"We've been there a couple times," Meyer

said. "That's our goal in the weight room. When you walk in you see a sign that says 'Get to Indy.' And they did. That's my job and our staff's and our leaders' job."

Should Ohio State defeat Northwestern, the Buckeyes would likely be jostling with Oklahoma for the final spot in the CFP. The Sooners will get a chance to avenge their only loss of the season in the Big 12 championship game against Tom Herman's Texas Longhorns. The two teams met in the annual Red River Rivalry, with Herman's squad coming away with a 48-45 victory in Dallas at the original Cotton Bowl stadium. The conference title game will be played at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, where the Buckeyes beat TCU earlier this year.

If Oklahoma was to lose, Ohio State's chances of getting into the playoff would figure to increase exponentially. The Big 12 title game is set to be played at noon, which would give Ohio State advance notice of what it needs to do in order to get into the CFP.

If both teams win, it will simply come down to the playoff committee. The four finalists will be announced Dec. 2, the day after the Big Ten title game. If Ohio State beats Northwestern and misses the playoffs, the Buckeyes will be headed to Pasadena, Calif., for the Rose Bowl against the Pac-12 champion – either Washington or Utah.

As for where the Buckeyes stand after The Game, they feel they are already one of the four best teams in the nation after rolling over the previous No. 4 team in Michigan.

"I think it is. That's my opinion," said fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon when asked whether he believes the Buckeyes are a top-four program. "Just because of things we've been through. We fight – maybe sometimes we don't play the best offense and then our best defense. But we fight, we find ways."

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OPINION

OSU's Huge Win Vs. U-M Is Hard To Describe

Epic. Monumental. Historic. Unexpected. There don't really seem to be words to describe Ohio State's dominating 62-39 victory over hated rival Michigan. It's easy to say that it was merely the Buckeyes finally living up to their potential, but that would be selling them short.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsmen

This was so thorough, so complete, that it left Michigan broken.

The Wolverines slunk off the Ohio Stadium field dejected, glassy eyed and forlorn, wondering what it is that went wrong. Didn't they have the best defense in the country? Ohio State made that defense look like a Pop Warner outfit, rolling up 567 yards and scoring the team's most points in the history of the storied rivalry.

This was going to be the year for the Wolverines. This was going to be the time.

The Buckeyes were sputtering, pairing a wondrous offense with a leaky defense and having a recent history of allowing adversity to bother them. Michigan would bring in a physical, street-fight mentality, and Ohio State would surely wither.

Um, not quite.

Ohio State was, on this day, a team that looked worthy of playing with anyone.

"I think Ryan Day and Kevin (Wilson), everybody, I think we're the second offense in America," OSU coach Urban Meyer said. "And I know we struggle all the time or whatever. But the second offense in America just put up a bunch of yards on the number one defense in America."

"We just have great players and a really good offensive staff, and that's how you do what we did. Did we see that? No. No. The guys just went out and played."

It could have come off as a boast, as an I-told-you-so to the rest of the country – and some doubters in Buckeye Nation – but it was very matter-of-fact.

Which begs the question, where has this bunch been all season?

It looked nothing like the group that barely hung on against Maryland, struggled against Nebraska or got its doors blown off against Purdue. This was a group that was prepared and focused, and they went out and performed.

"That was a love game," Meyer said. "That was one of those things, you hear the word 'brotherhood' and why do you really play? Why does a true soldier fight? It's not for hatred of those in front of you, it's love for those behind you. And that's a great quote we live by, and they proved it today."

It was evident almost from the word go that the Buckeyes weren't going to look like the confused group they have been for the majority of this season.

The defense held Michigan to an opening three-and-out, then the offense took over. OSU went 57 yards in six plays, among them a nifty first-down run by Dwayne Haskins which seemed to catch the Wolverines off guard.

Haskins has become a much more proficient runner in recent weeks, no longer resembling a baby giraffe taking its first steps. There is a smoothness, a confidence, that was missing previously. Haskins' legs have suddenly become a weapon, which must be disheartening to opposing defenses since his arm is already so proficient at producing damage.

The Buckeyes found the end zone to lead 7-0 three and a half minutes into the game and never looked back.

"It's a crazy win," Haskins said. "We saw a lot of man coverage, a lot of one-high, so we knew that we could get a lot of one-on-one matchups and crossing routes on them. We made some plays when it mattered most. It was a great win today."

And yes, there was a certain satisfaction in shattering the 60-point plateau against the Maize and Blue.

"I don't know about 62," Haskins said with a smile on whether he anticipated the score. "I knew we were going to come out and put on a show. The playmakers made plays. That's what mattered."

Michigan had the look of a team that was improving during the season, winning 10 straight after a narrow opening road loss to Notre Dame – a team that almost certainly punched its ticket to the College Football Playoff by outlasting rival USC later the same evening.

Jim Harbaugh had what many felt was his best team, and he had his hand-picked quarterback in Ole Miss transfer Shea Patterson, a Toledo native who grew up dreaming about playing in The Game. The Wolverines had two elite cover men in David Long and Lavert Hill, a snarling middle linebacker in Devin Bush and a pair of the best defensive linemen in the country in Rashan Gary and Chase Winovich.

None of that mattered.

"It didn't go good, didn't end up good," Harbaugh understated. "We take responsibility for that."

Harbaugh has legit coaching cred after turning around Stanford and going to a Super Bowl in San Francisco. But this was the Michigan alum's dream job, the place he called home. And when he took the head coaching position, his main goal, the thing that kept him up nights, was beating Ohio State.

His first three efforts were a mixed bag – a blowout in Ann Arbor, one epic double-overtime game in Columbus where his team went toe-to-toe with an OSU crew that was superior, and last year's contest that saw his Wolverines wither in the second half when Haskins relieved an injured J.T. Barrett.

This was going to be the year. This was Michigan's time.

Only it wasn't.

"They played great," Harbaugh said. "Their third quarter especially. They ran a lot of speed plays that got out on the perimeter and got loose. We also set them up in good field position with a couple of turnovers, and of course the blocked punt, which contributed to the score as well."

So if not this year, when?

Ohio State was a home underdog in the rivalry for the first time since 2004 and for just the eighth time in Meyer's time in Columbus.

"We didn't need the underdog score point," Haskins said of his team's motivation. "We didn't need the Revenge Tour. We didn't need the guaranteed win. We know what this game means to our school, to our teammates and to our coaches."

"I just knew in practice this week that I needed to bring a different energy, like I did against Maryland. I gave it my all today. And I'm glad we got the win."

Meyer was as loose and happy in the post-game as he's been all season. Blasting your rival will do that, it seems.

He reflected on not only the victory but what it meant in terms of the season and the adversity that has been faced.

"I'm extremely proud of our guys, the way they've fought through it," Meyer said of the

adversity. "And like someone was saying, nothing's ever good enough. We obviously had some adversity earlier in the year – not some, big-time adversity. And to come back against your rival and play like that, that's a focused team that loves each other and cares about each other."

There may have been just a bit more to it than that, however.

"We had a chip on our shoulder and wanted to show who we really were," said linebacker Malik Harrison, who was all over the field, netting seven tackles, two tackles for loss and a sack. He also was in Patterson's face much of the afternoon. OSU's linebackers have been much maligned during the season, rightfully so, as the weak link of the defense. But on this day, they were nearly flawless.

Fellow backer Tuf Borland was a wrecking ball, leading the team with 10 stops, and Pete Werner chipped in with six. Michigan hit a couple of plays here and there, taking advantage of a handful of missed assignments by the Buckeyes. But those were few and far between.

"That was a rugged week for our defense last week, rugged," Meyer said. "To come out and play like they did against that team was awesome."

Aside from the dozen penalties – most of which were the correct call, despite protestations from OSU fans – there wasn't much to grouse about.

Even the offensive line, which has at times looked like a 98-pound weakling, held up against what was supposed to be one of the best defensive lines in the country.

"I take a peek down here and under sacks it says zero," Meyer said.

So where does this leave Ohio State?

Ready to head to Indianapolis, for one thing.

The Buckeyes will face surprising Northwestern for the Big Ten crown, and they cannot get caught up in playing the Wildcats' game, which is akin to a root canal. They need to be fresh and focused and ready to pounce, as they were against Michigan.

After that, it could be on to the College Football Playoff, something that just three weeks ago seemed like a ridiculous proposition. Just winning out won't be enough for OSU, though. It will need some help, in the form of an Oklahoma loss to Texas in the Big 12 championship game. The Longhorns won a 48-45 thriller over the Sooners in the regular season, so it seems a good time to get behind Tom Herman. Can anyone say "Hook 'Em, Horns"?

Where does the loss leave Michigan?

Still with a shot at the Rose Bowl, but that wasn't what the season was supposed to be about.

The Wolverines sounded like a beaten bunch afterward.

"I'm pretty shocked the outcome was like this," safety Tyree Kinnel said. "They slowly devastated us throughout the game with all the yards they were putting up and how easily they

were scoring. It was tough. It was extremely tough. We made adjustments at halftime, and then they came out and beat us with something else. They had a great game plan and completely beat us today."

How completely?

So much that belief has been replaced by wishing.

"We've got a bright future ahead of us," U-M receiver Nico Collins said. "I'm hoping next year we can get that win."

Hoping?

That's about as complete as it gets. When a team hopes for victory instead of believes in it, the game is already lost.

Already A Legend

It took time for Chris Olave to work his way into the receiver rotation, but it will be difficult to keep him off the field going forward.

The freshman from California etched his name into The Game lore, catching a pair of touchdowns and blocking a punt that was returned for a score by fellow freshman Seyvyn Banks.

"Buckeye Nation, get used to that one now," Meyer said of Olave, who finished the afternoon with 48 yards and touchdowns on both of his grabs. "That's the real deal."

He joins others such as Tyvis Powell (hero of the 2013 42-41 game), Tom Klaban (kicked four field goals in 1974), Tim Biakabutuka (ran for 313 yards in 1995) and Todd Plate (two interceptions in 1988) as unsung heroes of the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry. And the good thing is that he has at least two more seasons to play.

Dandy Dozen

It's pretty simple, really – wins by Alabama and Clemson in their league championship games put both teams into the CFP. Notre Dame is already in. That leaves the fourth spot for either Ohio State or Oklahoma – or, possibly, Georgia, if it can beat the Crimson Tide. A nail-biting SEC title game could leave the door open for both Georgia and Alabama to make the field, in which case both the Sooners and Buckeyes would be on the outside looking in.

The best advice is for OSU to take care of business in Indianapolis and then let everything else work itself out.

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2. Clemson
3. Notre Dame
4. Georgia
5. Oklahoma
6. Ohio State
7. Michigan
8. UCF
9. Washington
10. Penn State
11. Florida
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Win Was No Surprise, But 'The Game' Was Stunning

When home fans are chanting "*Overrated! Overrated!*" as they were at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 24, it's usually a good thing. It almost always means that the home team has scored an upset over a strong opponent. In the case of Ohio State's stunning 62-39 win over archrival Michigan, Buckeye fans could just as easily have been chanting "*Underrated! Underrated!*" because that's what it turned out Ohio State may have been.

When I say "stunning" victory, I don't say that because it was surprising Ohio State won the game. Anyone who follows the rivalry knows that either team can win the game in any given year. That's what makes it a rivalry.

The victory was stunning because of just how dominant Ohio State was. Please note that the game could have easily been 69-39, but Buckeye head coach Urban Meyer called off the dogs at the Wolverine 7 with 52 seconds to go after easily marching 41 yards in four plays. Personally, I would have gone ahead and run up the score due to a dislike for Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh dating back to a certain guarantee game in 1986. But I don't have to face the Wolverines next season. Truth be told, in some ways it's more humiliating to call off the dogs. The act makes it clear who is in complete control.

I thought one of the telling moments in the game came well after the decision was no longer in doubt. Buckeye defensive back Shaun Wade put the big stick on Michigan tight end Sean McKeon in the flat after a short pass with Ohio State leading 62-32 and less than 5 minutes to play. I mean laid wood cleanly, but put the hammer down. And McKeon came up wanting to fight Wade. Nothing says, "Every pundit outside of the state of Ohio said we were going to dominate and go to the College Football Playoff and instead we are getting our butts whipped in front of 106,588 people and a national television audience for the seventh time in a row" like the frustration shown by McKeon.

What's Wade supposed to do? Hold up on the play because your team didn't answer the bell in its biggest game of the season? Sometimes you just have to take your licking like a man. Fortunately a fellow Wolverine held McKeon back before he made an even bigger fool of himself.

So what set the stage for this outcome to be so "stunning"?

I think the assumption that Michigan was going to dominate started with the equally stunning play of Ohio State's defense in its 52-51 overtime win over Maryland the week before. How could a team that was that terrible on defense beat the No. 4 team in the nation in a rivalry game that is traditionally decided by good defense?

The talking heads not only saw the Ohio State defensive ineptitude against the Terrapins, but on the flip side saw that Michigan, 10-1 and on a roll, came into the game with the top-rated unit in the nation in terms of total defense and passing defense. What those same "experts" seemed to overlook was the fact that Ohio State was No. 2 in the nation in total offense and passing offense. And while the Buckeyes, also 10-1 though frequently winning ugly, had given up 51 points against Maryland, they had scored 52.

If you actually took the time to look at the numbers, you could see that it shaped up to be a classic matchup, about as even as it gets.

So what took it from a classic matchup to a Buckeye rout?

For one thing, the experts seemed blinded by the arrival in Ann Arbor of quarterback Shea Patterson, the missing piece that would

finally put media darling coach Harbaugh over the top and make Michigan relevant again on the national scene. Patterson did his job, turning in a fine season as he led the Wolverines to 10 straight victories heading into The Game.

What those outside of Ohio seemed to forget was that Ohio State was led by a record-setting, Heisman Trophy-caliber quarterback in Dwayne Haskins, who maybe slipped off the radar a bit when he turned in a couple of mere mortal performances during the dog days of the season. By the time Michigan and Ohio State met on Nov. 24, Patterson was a mere afterthought in the wake of Haskins' monumental performance.

Michigan was also going to throw in a 1,000-yard running back in Karan Higdon behind a dominant offensive line – coached by former Buckeye line coach Ed Warinner, no less – against the porous Buckeye run defense that had allowed Maryland (339 rushing yards) and freshman Anthony McFarland (298 yards) to dominate on the ground the week before. Higdon was going to run wild against Ohio State.

Higdon, however, mimicked his coach from 32 years previous and guaranteed a Michigan victory. Coincidentally or otherwise, the Buckeye defense bottled up Higdon in the first half in particular and for much of the game.

Higdon picked up 8 yards on his first carry of the game but gained just 7 net yards on his next seven carries. By the time he ripped off a 15-yard run to start a drive in the middle of the second quarter, the Wolverines were already down 14-6. On the next play he was held to 4 yards, and three plays later Michigan was forced to punt. Ohio State took the ball and drove 79 yards to make it 21-6, and Higdon would not carry again in the first half.

He ended up with a respectable, though modest, 72 yards on 15 carries with a long of 24, a run that came with his team trailing 48-25 in the fourth quarter – hardly the McFarlandesque performance that so many had been expecting.

Don't forget, also, as so many people apparently did, that there was far more pressure on Michigan in this game than the Buckeyes. The Wolverines were the team that everyone was penciling in for their first visit to the College Football Playoff. This Wolverine squad was the team that was going to finally meet the expectations that had been assumed under Harbaugh.

And talk about pressure. What about the streak? Michigan had defeated Ohio State only twice since the Buckeyes defeated the Wolverines 310 days after Jim Tressel's hiring in 2001, and one of those victories came in Ohio State's dysfunctional year of 2011. I lived through the 2-10-1 John Cooper era and know how the pressure mounts with each passing loss. It's impossible to avoid the outside noise as you are constantly reminded of your ineptitude. Ultimately, you are not just playing your rival, but you are also playing against the streak.

Ohio State, on the other hand, was the scandal-rocked team with the ailing coach and the sieve for a defense that had been written off long ago, despite its 10-1 record. The Buckeyes could play free and loose, just as

teams such as Purdue and Maryland had done against Ohio State earlier in the year.

All that pressure on the Wolverines played into another factor in the blowout. The game was being played in Ohio Stadium. Once the Buckeyes jumped out to an early lead, the crowd revved up and the doubts for the Wolverines started rising. Sure, Michigan crept back into it, thanks largely to a bungled kickoff return by Demario McCall late in the first half, but the visitors were never able to overcome the Buckeyes and their 12th man.

While I never went so far as making a prediction for this edition of The Game, I honestly wasn't surprised at the victory. I told those of you who asked me a couple of weeks back that I was more concerned about the Michigan State game than I was the battle between the rivals (this of course was before the Maryland debacle), because I knew the Buckeyes would be focused and amped up for their game with Michigan.

While the defense had struggled for much of the season, it always seemed to come up big when it mattered, and rivalry week would be the impetus to give them the edge the Buckeyes needed.

Make no mistake about it, the defense was still suspect against Michigan, giving up 39 points and 401 yards, but six of those points should be charged against the special units after McCall's gaffe, and at key times the stop troops were stout, allowing the Wolverines to convert on just 6 of 14 third-down attempts, including just 2 of 8 in the final three quarters.

The Buckeye defenders also, for the most part, avoided their season-long Achilles' heel, the big play. Michigan's longest play, a 43-yard pass from Joe Milton to Nico Collins, came when Ohio State was already leading, 62-32, and the Wolverines' longest touchdown came from just 23 yards out on a pass from Patterson to Collins.

Ohio State's much-maligned linebacking corps turned in its best game of the season, including its much-maligned middle linebacker, Tuf Borland, who led all tacklers with 10 stops. Fellow "backer" Malik Harrison played at an All-Big Ten level with seven tackles, including two for loss and a sack.

The defense's strength, the line, also played one of its best games of the season, recording two of Ohio State's three sacks and turning in what seemed like many more quarterback hurries than the two for which the line and the team were given credit.

Safety Brendon White rounded back into form after an inconsistent outing against Maryland, tallying five stops and an interception to help solidify the secondary. But oh, those pass-interference calls!

Toss that defense in with Ohio State's prolific offense and you have a 62-39 Ohio State victory and the Buckeyes back in the playoff hunt.

It reminds me of a joke that loyal BuckeyeSports.com Forum poster Tiffin Buckeye submitted when we were collecting Michigan jokes awhile back.

Q. How do you make Wolverine cookies?

A. You put them in a big bowl and beat them for three hours.

Well it wasn't a bowl this time around, it was a horseshoe, and with ads and injuries,

Ohio State beat them for four hours and two minutes. But it was a huge Buckeye victory, nonetheless.

At some point, Michigan is going to beat Ohio State again. Maybe that win will swing the pendulum the other way, like the Buckeyes' win in the 2001 game under Jim Tressel turned things in the Buckeyes' favor. But speaking as an OSU grad and fan, not a journalist, I must say I am going to really savor this one.

I did want to remind outsiders and Buckeye fans alike that back in July, Meyer was considered one of the top two or three coaches in all of college football. He didn't suddenly become a mediocre football coach just because he was overly loyal to the grandson of a late mentor. Meyer demonstrated to Harbaugh, once again, what it takes to be an elite college football coach.

I do have one criticism of Meyer and his staff, however. And I am at odds with some on the BSB staff with this one.

Enough with bringing in quarterback Tate Martell for one play here or there. You have arguably the best quarterback in the country in Haskins with two great running backs and a host of great receivers. Why take your best player off the field and why interrupt the rhythm that your line and skill players have been building all game for a gimmick that hasn't worked all season?

Sorry for bringing up a Michigan Man, but does Bill Belichick take out Tom Brady when the Patriots get in the red zone?

No Championship Print BSB

For those of you who have been putting off signing up for access to BuckeyeSports.com, BSB's 24/7, full-service website, or have been avoiding it because you are stubborn, now is the time. There will be no print issue of BSB following the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 1. The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, our big Bowl Preview, is scheduled to be mailed on Dec. 12.

However, BuckeyeSports.com offers the BSB staff an enhanced opportunity to cover the game with Northwestern in Indianapolis. There will be daily stories leading up to the game, gameday coverage and ample coverage immediately following the game on the Saturday night of the championship and on Sunday, Dec. 2. BSB staff members and readers will also be discussing the game on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum.

We will once again be having an in-game thread on The Forum during the game with the Wildcats, including instant updates and analysis, as well as a little fun as readers and staffers frequently express their exasperation with the wildly unpredictable Buckeyes. While some readers don't like to break away from watching the game, you should at least check in during ads or between quarters. BSB staffer Garrett Stepien has been doing an outstanding job of updating stats and providing video highlight clips throughout the games. Readers can also offer their picks for Buckeye leaves after the game.

There will be condensed coverage of the Big Ten Championship Game in the Bowl Preview print issue.

Note also that with the early football recruiting signing period that starts Dec. 19 rapidly approaching, readers will also want to monitor Ohio State's progress toward its 2019 class daily on BuckeyeSports.com.

If you are not already enjoying this electronic service, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers, look for simple sign-up instructions on page 4 of this issue. Or give us a call at (614) 486-2202 and we will gladly get you started.