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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Nov. 28, 2020

Ohio State Survives Scare From Indiana

 By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

A win over the ninth-ranked team in the country would usually be cause for celebration. But following Ohio State's 42-35 victory against Indiana on Nov. 21 – which gave the Buckeyes sole possession of first place in the Big Ten's East Division – head coach Ryan Day seemed unsatisfied.

"I thought the start of the game was ridiculous," Day said after the game. "The energy that we came out with was as good as I've seen all year. We played really, really well in the first half. We really dominated."

"But then we gave up some big plays and let them back into the game. We have to figure out a way to close out games. This is the second game in a row now where we let a team hang around a little bit, and we have to get that fixed."

Ohio State's much-maligned defense was impressive in the first two quarters, holding Indiana to just seven points and minus-6 yards rushing.

The offense also put up 28 first-half points despite a pair of uncharacteristic first-quarter interceptions from quarterback Justin Fields, giving the Buckeyes a comfortable halftime lead.

The final two frames were a different story, however. The Hoosiers outscored the Buckeyes 28-14 and had the ball late in the fourth quarter with the chance to score the game-tying touchdown – or possibly the game-winning score, had they gone for two – in the final minute.

"I'm definitely not pleased," Day said. "A long way from pleased. We've got a long ways to go. But we've only played four games and it's almost Thanksgiving. It's bizarre. There's just so much that has gone into this season and so much these kids have been through. To the average person, they don't quite get that part of it."

"When you're in an environment like this and there's no fans and you have to bring your own energy, it's just a different dynamic. That's why you're seeing so many strange things that have gone on this year. I'm not making excuses. I'm just calling it for what it is. We have to keep growing and getting better and learn to adapt to this environment. It seems to me, whatever the reason is, we haven't been able to finish the last two games."



COURTESY OF THE OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

ON AND OFF AFTERNOON – Quarterback Justin Fields, left, accounted for 378 yards of total offense and three touchdowns in Ohio State's 42-35 win over Indiana but also threw three interceptions to match his previous career total.

Quarterback Michael Penix deserved a lot of credit for Indiana's second-half comeback, as he completed 27 of 51 passes for 491 yards and five touchdowns compared to just one interception.

His 491 passing yards were the fourth most in a game against Ohio State, with only Illinois' Dave Wilson (621 yards in 1980), Purdue's Scott Campbell (516 yards in 1981) and Purdue's Jim Everett (497 yards in 1985) having a better output. Interestingly, the Buckeyes are now 4-0 in those games.

"People have their opinions and didn't think we belonged on the same field with Ohio State," Indiana head coach Tom Allen said after the game. "I didn't really agree with that, but until you prove it on the field, it doesn't really matter what I think."

"We're showing that we're a good football team.

We're a really good football team. It's about continuing to show and prove on the field that we're one of the top programs in the Big Ten. We haven't been that in the past for a long time, and that's our goal. That's how we want to be, and I believe we're getting closer and closer all the time."

Hoosiers senior wide receiver Ty Fryfogle was the primary beneficiary of Penix's big day, catching seven passes for 218 yards and three touchdowns.

It was his second straight game with at least 200 yards receiving, a first in Big Ten history, and the second-most receiving yards ever surrendered in a single game by the Buckeyes, trailing only Clemson wide receiver Sammy Watkins, who caught 16 passes for 227

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OPINION

OSU Survives And That's What Matters Most



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No. 6	Nov. 14	No. 12	Dec. 26

The 2021 schedule will be determined based on the Big Ten's winter or spring schedule.

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After a day during which Justin Fields proved himself to be merely mortal and the Ohio State defense gave up the fourth-most passing yards in a single game in program history, it might also be worth noting the Buckeyes were playing the nation's No. 9-ranked team, a scrappy bunch from Indiana that played like it had everything to prove and nothing to lose.

Such a group makes for a dangerous opponent, and the fact that the third-ranked Buckeyes eventually prevailed with a 42-35 victory – despite a performance that was very much not their best – serves as just one more testament to this unpredictable, topsy-turvy, COVID-ravaged 2020 college football season.

Any win is a good win these days, and if you don't believe that, ask Tom Allen, Greg Schiano or any other head coach whose team has to count moral victories rather than real ones.

Anyone who saw the first 2½ minutes of the OSU-Indiana game probably thought they were about to witness a butt-whipping of epic proportions. Ohio State not only punched Indiana in the mouth at the outset, but the Buckeyes also seemed intent on making the Hoosiers enjoy the taste of their own blood.

After IU went nowhere with the first offensive series of the game, Fields hooked up with receiver Garrett Wilson on a catch-and-run that totaled 65 yards before the combination clicked again for a 10-yard touchdown. Two plays covering 75 yards in just 33 seconds and the Buckeyes were off and running with a 7-0 lead at the 12:32 mark of the first quarter.

Junior bone-crusher Josh Proctor followed that on the ensuing kickoff by nearly blasting Indiana return man Jacoby Hewitt into C-deck of the old Horseshoe, and then when the OSU defense dealt the Hoosiers a three-and-out that went backward by 8 yards, it looked like the rout was on.

But on the next play, Fields – who to that point this season in the first quarter was a perfect 21 for 21 for 375 yards and four touchdowns – threw perhaps his worst pass of the season, a throw that sailed behind Wilson and was intercepted by IU safety Jamar Johnson.

That touched off a wild rest of the game that saw the Buckeyes take a 28-point lead early in the third quarter only to watch as Indiana quarterback Michael Penix nearly rallied his team to a historic comeback.

Whatever defensive scheme the Buckeyes are using against the Indiana passing game, it's time to scrap it because Penix became the third Indiana QB in the last four years to throw for at least 300 yards against Ohio State. Penix barely completed 50 percent of his passes (52.9 percent to be exact), but his 27 completions averaged a whopping 18.2 yards.

And he had four completions of 50 or more yards against an OSU defense that gave up only one passing play of 50-plus yards during all of last season, and that didn't come until the third quarter of the Fiesta Bowl against Clemson.

Penix threw for 491 yards, the fourth-highest total for an Ohio State opponent in history and the most against the Buckeyes since Jim Everett of Purdue totaled 497 yards during his team's 41-27 loss on Oct. 19, 1985. Penix also connected for five touchdowns, the most for an opposing QB since Nate Stanley of Iowa threw for five scores during his team's 55-24 beatdown of the Buckeyes on Nov. 4, 2017.

Meanwhile, Fields pitched three interceptions in the game to equal his previous career total in 478 attempts. Almost as troubling was the fact that the mobile OSU quarterback was sacked five times as Indiana literally threw everything it could at him – sometimes send-

ing as many as three extra defenders on a blitz – and the Buckeyes never seemed to adjust to the oncoming assault.

Fields still managed to throw for 300 yards, his third straight game and sixth of his career with 300 or more passing yards. And he threw for two touchdowns to bring his career total to 54, tying him with Troy Smith and Dwayne Haskins for fifth on OSU's career list.

EDITOR'S
NOTEBOOK
Mark Rea

But he made some ridiculous mental mistakes, the kind one might expect from a quarterback making his college debut.

Especially troubling was Fields' second interception, a wrong-headed, desperation throw in the middle of the field while falling to the ground that was easy picking after a tip for defensive lineman Jerome Johnson. Then there was a rushed fourth-and-1 throw late in the fourth quarter that went sailing over the head of wide-open tight end Luke Farrell.

There is no doubt that Fields operates one of the most lethal passing games in college football, but there was absolutely no reason to force the issue against Indiana. As game as the Hoosiers were, they still were no physical match for the Buckeyes on either side of the ball, and it is unfathomable why OSU chose not to exploit that advantage more often.

Ohio State ran the ball 50 times and piled up 307 yards on the ground, winding up with a nice mix that accounted for approximately a 2-to-1 ratio of running to passing plays. But the Buckeyes didn't really rely on the ground-and-pound game until Indiana had pulled within seven points at the 10:26 mark of the fourth quarter. After that, OSU effectively played the field-position and clock-management games by running the ball on 14 occasions while Fields threw only three more times.

When the Big Ten season heads into December, weather throughout the Midwest is naturally going to turn nasty, and it will be paramount for teams with championship aspirations to rely heavily on their running games. A straight-ahead banger like the likes of Master Teague – who proved his workhorse capability with 26 attempts vs. the Hoosiers – and a complementary back such as Trey Sermon are going to serve the Buckeyes well down the stretch.

But Ryan Day would also do well to keep in mind that he has another weapon in his running game arsenal. Fields can be an electrifying runner and, given the chance, can give opposing defenses one more thing to worry about while trying to game-plan against the Buckeyes. Take out the lost yardage on the five sacks and Fields rushed for 101 yards on only 10 carries.

I understand the mentality of keeping your quarterback healthy by limiting his number of rushes. J.T. Barrett was often asked to shoulder more than his share of the load in the running game, and it took a heavy toll on his body. Likewise, Fields was less than 100 percent for last year's Fiesta Bowl against Clemson, and that might have been in a factor in why the Buckeyes fell just short in that game.

But I watched in 2006 when Jim Tressel turned his dual-threat quarterback into a pass-only machine, and while Troy Smith won the Heisman Trophy going away, taking away the threat of his running ability robbed Ohio

State of what could have been a valuable weapon against a savage Florida pass rush in the national championship game.

Here's hoping Day isn't traveling down that same path with Fields.

What Went Right

Lost amid all of those yards given up in the passing game was the fact that Ohio State completely shut down anything Indiana tried to do on the ground. The Hoosiers had averaged a modest 95.3 yards rushing over their four previous games but found themselves completely stymied by the Buckeyes. They wound up with a net of minus-1 yard rushing, the lowest total for a Big Ten opponent since Iowa had minus-9 during a 31-6 loss to the Buckeyes in 2005.

A side note: That rushing total must have been particularly galling to Indiana's running backs coach, a guy by the name of Mike Hart. Going back to his playing days at Michigan and counting four years in charge of the running game at IU, Hart is now 0-8 lifetime against Ohio State.

Any success the Buckeyes enjoyed stopping the run might be a double-edged sword, however, because it underscores the fact that the back seven is going to have to improve when opposing teams know how difficult it is to run the football. That would be especially true if the Buckeyes are fortunate enough to make the College Football Playoff and would have to face the likes of Alabama, Clemson or Florida, teams that rank among the top five passing offenses in the nation.

Ohio State has talented players starting in its secondary, but with the exception of Shaun Wade, none has much experience. Unfortunately, the cancellation of spring ball and the truncated way in which fall camp was conducted robbed those youngsters of invaluable practice time. Even Wade, who is adjusting to a position change on the fly, could have used the extra time.

The good news is that those young defenders are going to get better. The bad news is that the improvement might not show up this season. None of the remaining teams on Ohio State's schedule has a passing game on par with Indiana, but expect Illinois, Michigan State and Michigan to try to expose the OSU secondary and its growing pains as best they can.

Lost, too, among the defensive deficiencies were the performances of Teague and Wilson.

Teague tallied career highs with his 26 carries for 169 yards and put to rest (at least for now) the knock against him that he doesn't have breakaway speed with a 41-yard touchdown bolt midway through the second quarter.

The 5-11, 225-pound sophomore seems to enjoy contact, but he is coming off an Achilles injury and that's what makes Sermon so valuable. The Oklahoma graduate transfer added 60 yards on just nine carries, and together with Fields, the Buckeyes marked their first 300-yard rushing performance of the season.

Sermon can also be a weapon in the passing game if OSU would use him. He caught 36 passes for 391 yards and three touchdowns in three seasons with the Sooners.

Meanwhile, Wilson has emerged as one of the elite receivers in college football. He caught seven passes for 169 yards and two touchdowns against the Hoosiers, turning in his fourth straight 100-yard game. And he's still only a sophomore.

One final note about Penix and his 491 yards: Only Dave Wilson of Illinois (621 in 1980), Scott Campbell of Purdue (516 in 1981) and Everett (497 in 1985) have ever thrown for more yardage against the Buckeyes ... and Ohio State won all of those games.

COVER STORY

Buckeyes' Secondary, Second-Half Issues Remain

Continued From Page 1

yards and two scores in the Tigers' 2014 Orange Bowl victory.

Fryfogle also joined Watkins, Cincinnati's Chris Moore (221 yards in 2014) and Nebraska's J.D. Spielman (200 yards in 2017) as the only opposing wide receivers to reach 200 yards in a game against Ohio State.

"If we don't give up the big plays, we probably run away with this game," Day said. "The good news is, we obviously stopped the run. There was no run game at all. It was all passing. We're going to go back, watch the film and figure out where these issues are that are creating these big plays. When you stop the big plays, you'll be in pretty good shape. We have to get that changed."

"Anytime you have a problem like that, it's one of three things. You ask yourself if you have the right personnel and if the scheme is giving our guys the best opportunity to be successful. And if both of those boxes get checked, it goes to coaching. When you're trying to fix something, one of those three things needs addressed."

Fields, who entered the game as a Heisman Trophy front-runner, completed 18 of 30 passes for 300 yards and two touchdowns.

But he also threw a total of three interceptions, including one that was fumbled back to the Buckeyes in the third quarter, to double his career total.



COURTESY OF THE OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

GIVE AND TAKE – Though junior cornerback Shaun Wade returned an interception 36-yards for a score in the third quarter, he also gave up a 56-yard touchdown reception in the fourth that helped Indiana close the gap.

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COVER STORY

"I didn't play well at all," Fields said after the game. "I have to improve. I have to get better. That's all I really have to say."

Fields, who also added 78 yards and one score on the ground, faced constant pressure all afternoon from an Indiana defense that entered the game with a plus-eight turnover margin. In addition to his three interceptions, he was sacked five times.

"We knew going in that it was going to be a high-risk, high-reward game," Day said. "Overall, I thought he played really gutsy. He made some big-time throws. They were blitzing every snap, so there was going to be negative plays and there was going to be some big plays, and that's kind of how it played out."

"You certainly want to have those plays back and those interceptions back. But at the same time, you have to be aggressive and you have to go at them. You can't be on your heels when you play

against a defense like this. So there's a lot to learn from, but overall, the production was really good. But we've got to clean up those turnovers."

In the end, the Buckeyes put up 607 yards of total offense, including 307 on the ground, and kept their undefeated season alive.

"Looking back on everything we've been through in the last few months, to be 4-0 and in first place in the Big Ten East, it's a big, big deal. I couldn't be prouder of this team," Day said. "Most people don't know what these guys have been through. They don't understand the sacrifices that have been made. They haven't seen their families in months. When they leave the facility, they're isolated in their room and not able to go anywhere because of this virus."

"This family has stuck together. We said going into the game we just have to figure out a way to win this game. All that matters is that you win."



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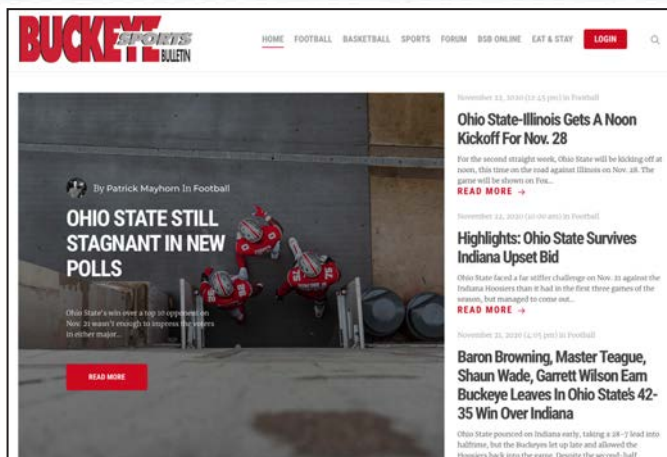
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OHIO STATE VS. INDIANA

OSU's Run Game Comes To Life Against IU

Through the first three games of the season, all the attention had been on the success of Ohio State's pass game, with junior quarterback Justin Fields completing 86.7 percent of his passes and throwing for 908 yards and 11 touchdowns with not a single interception.

And with Fields' success came some doubts about the ability of the run game that, despite breaking the 200-yard threshold in each of the games against Nebraska, Penn State and Rutgers, did not have the same level of efficiency that the Buckeyes

touchdowns, while Fields threw for two on the afternoon.

"It's definitely, I think, improving every week," sophomore running back Master Teague said following the victory. "Shout-out to the O-line, they did a great job. Right now, overall, I feel good about it. Of course we'll go back to the film and see little nuances that we can assess and get fixed and work on, but overall, I feel good, I feel great about it."

Teague had arguably his best game in an Ohio State uniform in the game against the Hoosiers, finishing with a career-high 169 yards and two touchdowns on 26 carries, with his carry total also being the highest in his tenure with the Buckeyes.

Though he said he will do whatever is asked of him for the team, he did say that he thought he was able to gain more momentum throughout the game because of an increased workload.

"I'm here to do whatever's best for the team, and if the coaches feel that's best for the team, I'm willing to do that, go out there every time," Teague said. "If not, then whatever that looks like, I'm willing to do it and continue to make plays and help the team win."

Still, Teague said he felt like he was in much more of a rhythm this week and that he thought he had a much stronger performance against Indiana than in the weeks prior.

"I think I did get in a good groove today," Teague said. "Overall, I feel like I got in a good groove and was able to make plays and help the team win and come to a



COURTESY OF OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

MAN ON THE RUN – Sophomore running back Master Teague rushed for a career-high 169 yards and two touchdowns in Ohio State's 42-35 win over Indiana on Nov. 21.

GAME NOTEBOOK

Wyatt Crosher

were used to after a 2,003-yard, 21-touchdown campaign on 6.7 yards per carry by J.K. Dobbins a season prior.

But against Indiana, despite another 300-yard passing effort by Fields, Ohio State was not able to strictly rely on the arm talent of its former five-star prospect, with Fields throwing a trio of interceptions, doubling his career total in the process.

That left room for the rushing attack to step up, and step up it did in a big way for the Buckeyes, totaling 307 yards on 50 carries for a healthy 6.1 yards per rush in the 42-35 win over No. 9 Indiana. The ground game also accounted for three



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OHIO STATE VS. INDIANA

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

Though it had surpassed 200 yards on the ground during each of the first three games of the season, Ohio State's rushing attack had never found much in terms of efficiency heading into its matchup against Indiana. That changed against the Hoosiers, with the Buckeyes breaking the 300-yard threshold with 307 yards on 50 rushes, good for a very respectable 6.1 yards per carry. Sophomore tailback Master Teague led the way with 169 yards and two touchdowns on 26 carries, while senior back Trey Sermon also impressed in limited action, carrying the ball nine times for 60 yards. Junior quarterback Justin Fields was also much more involved in the run game, finishing with 15 carries for 78 yards and a touchdown. If sacks are excluded, he broke the 100-yard barrier with 10 rushes for 101 yards.

Speaking of Fields, Ohio State's pass game was again very strong for much of the game, with the third-year signal caller completing 18 of 30 passes for 300 yards and two touchdowns, with 270 of those yards going to his two main wide receiver targets: sophomore Garrett Wilson (seven catches, 169 yards, two touchdowns) and junior Chris Olave (eight catches, 101 yards). Ohio State also excelled in stuffing Indiana's run game, allowing minus-1 yard total on 16 attempts.

What Didn't Work

Though Fields broke the 300-yard passing threshold for the third straight game, he did so by doubling his career total for interceptions. On the day, Fields threw three interceptions, two of which

came on attempts to avoid a sack and the other on a misread in coverage while trying to get the ball to Olave. But Fields' struggles were overshadowed by Ohio State's problems stopping the pass on the other side of the ball. Indiana sophomore quarterback Michael Penix completed 27 of his 51 pass attempts for 491 yards and five touchdowns with just one interception. The 491 yards through the air were the fourth most allowed in program history and the most since allowing 497 to Purdue in 1985. Nearly half of the yards went to senior wide receiver Ty Fryfogle, who finished with seven catches for 218 yards and three touchdowns.

Play Of The Game

After holding a 35-7 lead earlier in the third quarter, Ohio State started to struggle to put points on the board, and the Indiana offense got rolling. After a pair of touchdown connections from Penix to Fryfogle, the Hoosiers were trailing by just two scores with plenty of time to play. A missed 44-yard field-goal attempt by Ohio State freshman kicker Jake Seibert gave Indiana the ball with a chance to bring the game within one possession, but on second-and-10 from the Indiana 27, Penix threw to the right sideline, looking for wide receiver Miles Marshall. Cornerback Shaun Wade read it, made his first interception of the season and took it 36 yards to the end zone to give the Buckeyes a 42-21 lead. That ended up being the deciding touchdown, as the Hoosiers scored twice more through the air, and the Ohio State offense was held scoreless in the final 27:10 of the game.

— Wyatt Crosher

victory, so I feel good about that."

Coming into the game, Teague was averaging 4.5 yards per carry on just 15.7 attempts per game, both averages he easily eclipsed during the win over Indiana. That comes in part due to some added explosiveness that the former four-star running back out of Murfreesboro (Tenn.) Blackman was lacking in prior matchups.

Against Indiana, Teague had runs of 19, 32 and 41 yards, with the latter two both being his two longest of the season. The 41-yard rush also ended in the end zone after Teague took the handoff to the left side of the field and exploded through a big gap that was created by some great blocking, specifically from junior tight end Jeremy Ruckert, and took it the distance for a score.

"It feels great," Teague said on his lengthy touchdown run. "That's one part of my game that I do have, and I have that capability of a home-run hitter but just hadn't been able to do that yet. I was glad I was able to do that today and continue to do even more and just, again, shout-out to the O-line. They did a great job blocking on that play."

Teague was not alone in improved production, though, as his typical co-starter, senior running back Trey Sermon, was much more efficient than he had been in his first three games at Ohio State following a transfer from Oklahoma. After rushing for 4.8 yards per carry heading into the Nov. 21 matchup, Sermon ran nine times for 60 yards, breaking off 16- and 15-yard runs in limited action.

Fields also got in on the rushing attack much more than he had the past two games. After 3 yards on 12 combined carries against the Nittany Lions and Scarlet Knights, the junior quarterback ran the ball 15 times for 78 net yards and a touchdown, his third score on the ground this season. Excluding sacks, Fields ran 10 times for 101 yards on the day.

After the game, Fields said that the success in the run game helped to pick up the offense while he struggled with turnovers throughout the hotly contested matchup.

"When I'm not picking up the offense, other players have to pick me up," Fields said. "I think Master, Trey and those other running backs did a great job out there, and they were just running north and south, being physical with the other team. So they helped me out a lot, and they helped the team out a lot. I'm proud of those guys."

Defensive Line Stifles Hoosiers' Run Game

While Ohio State started to figure out its running attack against Indiana, the Hoosiers did not have the same level of success, continuing their season's trend of a one-dimensional offense.

Indiana sophomore quarterback Michael Penix dominated against the Buckeyes and has been a very strong player all season, but he has never had much of any help from his running backs, with the Hoosiers averaging 2.7 yards per carry heading into the game against Ohio State, and that total only getting worse afterward.

On the game, Indiana ran the ball 16 times for minus-1 yard, and while running backs Sampson James and Stevie Scott combined for better numbers than that (10 carries for 16 yards), it was still an almost nonexistent ground game to complement Penix's historic output.

But the focus from Ohio State defensive tackle Tommy Togiai, who finished with a tackle and a pass breakup, was on Penix, who was sacked only twice and added 491

yards and five scores.

"I think we can do a better job probably, I know we were still getting pressure on him, even though he was still throwing it up and getting completed passes, but I think we can maybe try and do a better job of just getting there faster," Togiai said. "I think the last couple of drives, we were getting after him a little bit, so I think we need to try to replicate that and start doing more of that."

Buckeye Receiving Duo Continues To Shine

Fields may have not had his strongest showing of the season, but his two main receiving targets continued to produce at the highest level for the fourth straight game. Junior wide receiver Chris Olave and sophomore wide receiver Garrett Wilson each hit the 100-yard receiving threshold once again, marking the third time this year that the duo has hit that benchmark together.

Olave had eight catches for 101 yards on the afternoon on nine targets, with a long of 31 yards. His only missed target was on an interception. Wilson had seven receptions for 169 yards and a pair of touchdowns and once again started out this game with a bang.

On Ohio State's first offensive play of the day, Fields found Wilson for a 65-yard connection. He then hit him again on the next play for a 10-yard score. Wilson's yardage total was the fourth straight game he hit the century mark, putting him just one game shy of the program record of five straight games set by Cris Carter in 1986.

The performances by Olave and Wilson through the air was difficult to deal with, according to Indiana head coach Tom Allen, and it was made even more difficult because of Ohio State's success on the ground.

"They've got so much talent on the perimeter that stresses you to be able to — you want to get pressure on them and then stop the run, so it's just kind of a catch-22 they put you in because of their talent," Allen said.

But Olave had just two catches for 11 yards in the second half, and while Wilson still had success over the last two quarters

(five catches, 86 yards), Indiana did start to have more success on the defensive side of the ball as the game went on.

Fields, however, said after the game that he would not question the play calling of head coach Ryan Day whatsoever.

"Coach Day's the head coach," Fields said. "I just go out there and run the plays, to be honest. I'm not going to have an opinion on the kind of plays we run. I'm just going to run the plays to the best of my ability and try to make the best I can out of it."

Day Stays Aggressive In Fourth-Down Miss

Ohio State had a chance to take a two-score lead with less than five minutes to play in the fourth quarter, facing a fourth-and-1 at the Indiana 7. Instead of attempting a field goal with true freshman kicker Jake Seibert, who had missed his only collegiate field-goal attempt from 44 yards out in the third quarter, Day elected to trust his offense and go for it.

Fields took the ball on a bootleg play to the right side of the ball and, while pressured, threw the ball to fifth-year senior tight end Luke Farrell, but the two could not connect, resulting in a turnover on downs.

"I think they covered it pretty well," Fields said. "I don't know if they were

looking for it. I don't know if they were prepared for the naked (bootleg), but we basically ran a bootleg play and everybody was covered, and then Luke's guy fell off on me at the last minute, so I tried to get it to him and then the pass was just off the mark."

Ultimately, the failed conversion did not hurt the Buckeyes much, as the Ohio State defense forced a three-and-out on the following Indiana drive. But Day did not second-guess his decision after the game, saying that it was important to not get complacent during a top-10 matchup.

"Always want to be aggressive," Day said. "Fourth-and-1, we've gone for it before in those situations. We'll continue to do that. We always want to be aggressive. I felt like, at that point, they were moving the ball pretty well and I was worried that a field goal might not do it and wanted to be aggressive, wanted to go up two touchdowns. And actually I liked the call. We have to execute it better, but either way, we're going to be aggressive in those situations."

"Looking back, when you don't get it, sure, go kick the field goal. But there's been times where we've gone for it in those situations and got it and then pulled away from teams. So we are always going to be aggressive and then not second-guess ourselves when it doesn't work."



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OHIO STATE VS. INDIANA

Hoosiers Put Up Fight But Buckeyes Prevail

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Little did Ohio State know that cornerback Shaun Wade's 36-yard interception return for a touchdown and a 21-point lead in the waning seconds of the third quarter would prove to be the difference, but it was when the No. 3 Buckeyes held off ninth-ranked Indiana 42-35 at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 21.

It was that type of game in the battle for first place in the East Division because Indiana quarterback Michael Penix threw for 491 yards and five touchdowns, two coming after Wade's pick-six made it 42-21 heading into the fourth quarter.

The Buckeyes (4-0) had built the lead despite an uncharacteristically poor outing by quarterback Justin Fields, who threw his first three interceptions of the season but still tossed two TDs and got support from Master Teague's two rushing scores to help forge a 35-7 lead early in the third quarter.

Fields gave no indication early that he would struggle against the blitz-crazed Hoosiers.

After Indiana (4-1) punted on its first possession, it took 37 seconds for the Buckeyes to take a 7-0 lead. That was enough time to go 75 yards in two plays – a 65-yard catch-and-run from Fields to sophomore receiver Garrett Wilson to the 10 and a toss to Wilson on the next snap with 12:32 left in the first quarter for the six points.

On the Buckeyes' next drive, Fields threw his first INT when Jamar Johnson grabbed it at the IU 23 and returned it 33 yards to the OSU 44, but the Hoosiers turned it over on downs at the 36.

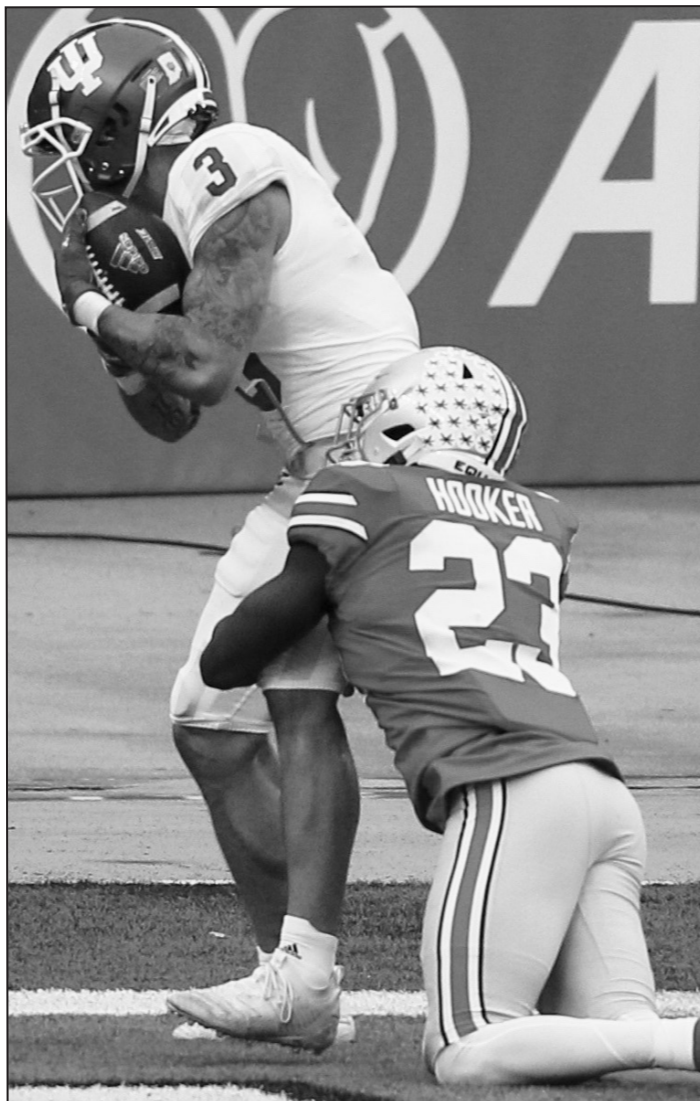
Fields threw another interception in the first quarter at the IU 43 on a tipped ball corralled by defensive tackle Jerome Johnson. The Hoosiers went three-and-out.

Indiana made it 7-7 at 11:03 of the second quarter by going 84 yards in 3:05 with the biggest of the six plays being Penix connecting for 68 yards with Miles Marshall to the 3.

Two plays later Whop Philyor, who had reeled in a 10-yard reception to convert a third-and-7 from the Indiana 19 to keep the drive alive, had a 4-yard TD catch.

It was the genesis of a big game for Penix, who was 27 of 51 but had that fateful pick by Wade.

Ohio State gained a 14-7 lead at the 8:57 mark of the second when Teague used strong blocking on the edge to run 41 yards to pay dirt. He would finish with



COURTESY OF THE OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

DEFENSIVE LAPSE – Indiana wide receiver Ty Fryfogle caught seven passes for 218 yards and three touchdowns against Ohio State, which marked the second-most receiving yards the Buckeyes have ever surrendered to a single player in a game.

a career-best 169 yards on 26 carries.

The seven-play, 75-yard, 2:06 drive was made possible by Chris Olave's third-down catches of 16 and 8 yards for first downs.

Ohio State extended the lead with Teague's 2-yard rush with 4:32 left in the quarter. Trey Sermon had three carries

for 28 yards, Jaxon Smith-Njigba had a key third-down catch at the IU 48 for 7 yards, and Fields scrambled for a 30-yard run to the 2 to set up the score.

The game turned even further for the Buckeyes thanks to the defense, which – after allowing a 51-yard catch by David Ellis to the 13 on blown coverage – got the ball back on the ensuing play. Ellis caught the ball at the 5, but Baron Browning loosened it with a reach around, Pete Werner smacked Ellis and Browning recovered the fumble at the 7.

OSU went 93 yards in nine plays, consuming 2:54 before Fields escaped pressure and ran for a 9-yard TD, leaping into the end zone from the 2, with 17 seconds remaining before the half for a 28-7 advantage. Olave came up big again in the series. Facing a third-and-4 from the OSU 13, he had a 31-yard catch to spark the drive and later added a 13-yard catch.

Ohio State began the second half just like the first with Fields finding Wilson

for a 9-yard score to make it 35-7 at 12:10. Wilson had a 39-yard grab earlier in the drive, and Fields added an 11-yard run to the 9 as part of the six-play, 75-yard march that used 2:50.

Penix continued to torch the OSU secondary when he hooked up with Tyler Fryfogle for a 63-yard touchdown on the next series to lower the deficit to 35-14 with 10:48 left in the third quarter.

Fryfogle had 218 yards and three TDs from seven catches for the game.

Wackiness ensued when the Buckeyes took over as Fields was in the grasp of tacklers when he wildly threw his third interception. Jamar Johnson was again the culprit. He picked it off at the OSU 40 and ran to the 16 where the intended receiver, freshman receiver Julian Fleming, ran him down and forced a fumble that left tackle Thayer Munford fell on.

Undeterred, the Hoosiers limited the Buckeyes to 5 yards on three carries and after the punt made quick work for a 35-21 score. They used five plays to go 60 yards with Marshall grabbing a 12-yard pass from Penix, Philyor adding a 15-yard catch and Fryfogle scoring with a 33-yard reception with 5:14 left in the third.

Ohio State wasted a 32-yard gain by Teague when freshman Jake Seibert, kicking for the injured Blake Haubeil, missed from 44 yards on his first career attempt.

The Hoosiers forced the long try with the aid of one of their five sacks for the game. The blitz-crazy Hoosiers caused Fields to have his worst game of the season as he was 18 of 30 for 300 yards with two TDs and the three interceptions, although he added 78 yards on the ground with another score.

Wade got some redemption for the defensive backs with his pick-six with 49 seconds remaining in the third quarter to make it 42-21.

However, Penix engineered a 75-yard, 10-play sequence that saw him complete a 16-yard TD strike to Ellis on a fourth-and-10 to make it 42-28 with 12:26 left in the game. Philyor had catches of 11 and 14, and Fryfogle contributed 37 yards on two grabs.

After an OSU punt, Penix threw a 56-yard TD to Fryfogle over Wade on the second play, and suddenly it was 42-35 with 10:26 left.

Ohio State used up 5:47 and went 68 yards but was stopped on fourth-and-1 from the 7 when Fields' pass to Luke Farrell was incomplete with 4:39 to play.

The Buckeyes forced an Indiana punt after three plays and took over at their 32 after a 55-yard punt, but after eating up another 2:32, they punted it back to the Hoosiers, who started at their 22 with 38 seconds left.

Seven plays moved the ball only to the Indiana 38 with five seconds left, and on the last play Penix passed 7 yards to Peyton Hendershot. After three laterals, Ellis fumbled, and Zach Harrison got it for the Buckeyes at the IU 34 to end the game.

Game Notes

Olave had eight catches for 101 yards. Wilson had seven for 169 yards and two TDs. ...OSU had 607 total yards (300 passing, 307 running). Indiana gained 490 yards (491 passing, minus-1 rushing).



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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 42, Indiana 35

Nov. 21, 2020 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, OH

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
INDIANA	0	7	14	14	35
OHIO STATE	7	21	14	0	42

First Quarter

OSU – Wilson, 10-yard pass from Fields (Seibert kick), 12:32; 2 plays, 75 yards, 0:33 TOP.

Second Quarter

IU – Philyor, 4-yard pass from Penix (Campbell kick), 11:03; 6 plays, 84 yards, 3:05 TOP.

OSU – Teague, 41-yard run (Seibert kick), 8:57; 7 plays, 75 yards, 2:06 TOP.

OSU – Teague, 2-yard run (Seibert kick), 4:32; 8 plays, 76 yards, 3:02 TOP.

OSU – Fields, 9-yard run (Seibert kick), 0:17; 9 plays, 93 yards, 2:54 TOP.

Third Quarter

OSU – Wilson, 9-yard pass from Fields (Seibert kick), 12:10; 6 plays, 75 yards, 2:50 TOP.

IU – Fryfogle, 63-yard pass from Penix (Campbell kick), 10:48; 3 plays, 75 yards, 1:22 TOP.

IU – Fryfogle, 33-yard pass from Penix (Campbell kick), 5:14; 5 plays, 60 yards, 1:59 TOP.

OSU – Wade, 36-yard interception return (Seibert kick), 0:49.

Fourth Quarter

IU – Ellis, 16-yard pass from Penix (Campbell kick), 12:26; 10 plays, 75 yards, 3:23 TOP.

IU – Fryfogle, 56-yard pass from Penix (Campbell kick), 10:26; 2 plays, 56 yards, 0:14 TOP.

Att. – 635

Weather – 45 degrees, light rain; wind N 6 mph

Team Statistics

	IU	OSU
First Downs	19	27
Rushing	2	13
Passing	17	13
Penalty	0	1
Rushes-Yards	16-(-1)	50-307
Passing Yards	491	300
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	27-51-1	18-30-3
Offensive Plays	67	80
Total Net Yards	490	607
Third Down Efficiency	4-13	6-14
Punts-Avg.	6-43.2	5-42.6
Fumbles-Lost	4-3	0-0
Penalties	2-30	3-35
Time of Possession	22:58	36:24

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – IU: James 3-10; Scott 7-6; Ellis 1-2; Penix 3-(-2); TEAM 2-(-17).

OSU: Teague 26-169; Fields 15-78; Sermon 9-60.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – IU: Penix 27-51-1-491-5. OSU: Fields 18-30-3-300-2.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – IU: Fryfogle 7-218; Philyor 6-56; Marshall 4-89; Ellis 4-86; Hendershot 4-32; Scott 2-23; Penix 0-(-13). OSU: Olave 8-101; Wilson 7-169; Sermon 1-13; Williams 1-10; Smith-Njigba 1-7.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.) – IU: Whitehead 6-43.2. OSU: Chrisman 5-42.6.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Avg.) – IU: Taylor 2-11.0. OSU: None.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Avg.) IU: Hewitt 1-11.0. OSU: McCall 1-18.0.

MISSED FIELD GOALS – IU: None. OSU: Seibert (44).

FORCED FUMBLES – IU: None. OSU: Werner, Fleming.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES – IU: None. OSU: Browning 1-0; Harrison 1-0; Munford 1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS – IU: Ja. Johnson 2-57; Je. Johnson 1-0 OSU: Wade 1-36.

SACKS – IU: Ja. Johnson 1-0-8; Je. Johnson 1-0-8; Williams 1-0-3; Casey 1-0-2; Jones 1-0-2. OSU: Cooper 1-0-6; Werner 1-0-5.

TACKLES FOR LOSS – IU: Ja. Johnson 1-0-8; Je. Johnson 1-0-8; McFadden 1-0-4; Williams 1-0-3; Casey 1-0-2; Jones 1-0-2. OSU: Cooper 1-0-6; Werner 1-0-5; Borland 1-0-1; Garrett 1-0-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – IU: McFadden 10-0-10; Williams 6-1-7; Mullen 4-3-7; Jones 3-3-6; Ja. Johnson 5-0-5; Je. Johnson 3-1-4; Ziemba 3-1-4; Head 2-2-4; Taylor 3-0-3; Fitzgerald 2-1-3; Casey 2-1-3; Matthews 0-3-3; Bonhomme 0-3-3; Miller 2-0-2; Sanguinetti 2-0-2; Elliott 1-1-2; King 1-0-1; Smolar 1-0-1. OSU: Browning 7-1-8; Werner 5-3-8; Proctor 3-0-3; Wade 2-1-3; Borland 2-1-3; Garrett 2-1-3; Olave 2-0-2; Hooker 2-0-2; Cooper 1-0-1; Fleming 1-0-1; Banks 1-0-1; Hilliard 1-0-1; Mitchell 0-1-1; Vincent 0-1-1; Togiai 0-1-1.

Players In The Game

IU – Haggard, Powell, Love, Nworah, Bedford, Marshall, Philyor, Fryfogle, Penix, Scott, Hendershot, Head, Elliott, Johnson, Bonhomme, McFadden, Jones, Fitzgerald, Williams, Matthews, Johnson, Mullen, Swinton, Taylor, Hewitt, Ervin-Poindexter, James, Miller, Wracher, Whitehead, Ellis, Tracy, King, Sanguinetti, Pierre, Bonds, Lloyd, Barnes, Williams, Casey, Nofoagatoto'a, Swann, Person, Katic, Crider, Rafferty, Weaver, Beery, Cooper, Harris, Ziemba, Barner, Bjorson, Smolar, Campbell.

OSU – Fields, Olave, Wilson, Teague, Davis, Myers, Munford, Miller, Petit-Frere, Williams, Farrell, Cooper, Smith, Togiai, Garrett, Browning, Banks, Werner, Williamson, Hilliard, Wade, Borland, Watts, Hickman, Ransom, DiMaccio, McCall, Mitchell, Fleming, Robinson, Jackson, Vincent, Sermon, Harrison, Cooper, Smith-Njigba, Stover, Babb, Gant, Chambers, Hooker, Johnson, Rossi, Proctor, Kacherski, Friday, Jones, Cupp, Wray, Johnson, Jones, Cage, Ruckert, Chrisman, Seibert.

Season Statistics

Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Oct. 24	(5) NEBRASKA	W, 52-17	1,344
Oct. 31	(3) at Penn State (18)	W, 38-25	1,500
Nov. 7	(3) RUTGERS	W, 49-27	1,275
Nov. 14	(3) at Maryland	Canceled	N/A
Nov. 21	(3) INDIANA (9)	W, 42-35	635
Nov. 28	(3) at Illinois	TBA	
Dec. 5	at Michigan State	TBA	
Dec. 12	MICHIGAN	Noon	
Dec. 19	Big Ten Championship Week	TBA	

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

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	104	78
Rushing	44	22
Passing	50	50
Penalty	10	6
Average Per Game/Rush	233.2	98.5
Average Per Game/Pass	302.0	291.0
Total Offense	2141	1558
Total Plays	293	261
Average Per Game	535.2	389.5
Average Per Play	7.3	6.0
Penalties-Yards	24-203	24-234
Fumbles-Lost	5-2	9-7
Third Down Efficiency	31-57	18-49
Percentage	54%	37%
Fourth Down Efficiency	5-7	4-7
Percentage	71%	57%
Sacks-Yards	11-52	12-71
Time Of Possession Avg.	34:27	25:23

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	42	66	45	28	0	181	45.2
Opponents	13	17	30	44	0	104	26.0

Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Master Teague	73	380	5.2	6	41
Trey Sermon	45	232	5.2	0	36
Justin Fields	42	135	3.2	3	30
Steele Chambers	8	78	9.8	0	38
Garrett Wilson	2	67	33.5	0	62
Jack Miller	2	23	11.5	1	21
Xavier Johnson	4	17	4.2	0	7
Demario McCall	1	12	12.0	0	12
Miyon Williams	1	5	5.0	0	5
TEAM	2	-16	-8.0	0	0
OSU Totals	180	933	5.2	10	62
OPP Totals	111	394	3.5	4	66

Passing Comp. Att. Pct. Yds. TD-INT Effic.

Justin Fields	90	113	79.6	1208	13-3	202.1
OSU Totals	90	113	79.6	1208	13-3	202.1
OPP Totals	95	150	63.3	1164	9-2	145.7

Receiving Rec. Net Avg. TD Long

Garrett Wilson	31	513	16.5	4	65
Chris Olave	26	389	15.0	4	49
Jeremy Ruckert	9	60	6.7	3	13
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	6	17	2.8	1	7
Jameson Williams	5	78	15.6	1	38
Trey Sermon	4	35	8.8	0	13
Master Teague	3	37	12.3	0	23
Luke Farrell	3	26	8.7	0	16
Demario McCall	1	27	27.0	0	27
Julian Fleming	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jake Hausmann	1	13	13.0	0	13
OSU Totals	90	1208	13.4	13	65
OPP Totals	95	1164	12.3	9	68

Scoring TD EPK EPR EPRC FG PTS

Master Teague	6	-	-	-	-	36
Chris Olave	4	-	-	-	-	24
Garrett Wilson	4	-	-	-	-	24
Jeremy Ruckert	3	-	-	-	-	18
Justin Fields	3	-	-	-	-	18
Jake Seibert	-13-13	-	-	-	0-1	13
Blake Haubeil	-	9-9	-	-	1-2	12
Jameson Williams	1	-	-	-	-	6
Dominic DiMaccio	-	3-3	-	-	1-2	6
Jack Miller	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	1	-	-	-	-	6
Shaun Wade	1	-	-	-	-	6
Seyn Banks	1	-	-	-	-	6
OSU Totals	25	25-25	-	-	2-5	181
OPP Totals	14	8-8	0-1	0-5	4-4	104

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Blake Haubeil	0-1	1-1	0-0	0-0	2-3
Dominic DiMaccio	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-2
Jake Seibert	0-0	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-1
OSU Totals	1-3	1-1	0-1	0-0	2-5
OPP Totals	1-1	2-2	0-0	1-1	4-4

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Drue Chrisman	13	546	42.0	0	52
OSU Totals	13	546	42.0	0	52
OPP Totals	20	911	45.5	0	56

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Shaun Wade	1	36	36.0	1	36
Marcus Hooker	1	31	31.0	0	31
OSU Totals	2	67	33.5	1	36
OPP Totals	3	57	19.0	0	33

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Garrett Wilson	3	32	10.7	0	22
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	2	4	2.0	0	4
OSU Totals	5	36	7.2	0	22
OPP Totals	3	80	26.7	1	58

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Demario McCall	4	60	15.0	0	29
Xavier Johnson	1	11	11.0	0	11
Garrett Wilson	1	4	4.0	0	4
OSU Totals	6	75	12.5	0	29
OPP Totals	10	166	16.6	0	26

Def. Leaders Solo Ast. Tot. TFL-Yds. Sacks

Pete Werner	11	13	24	2.5-10	1-0.5
Baron Browning	12	7	19	1.0-3	-
Tuf Borland	9	10	19	2.5-11	1-0.8
Tommy Togiai	6	9	15	3.0-13	3-0-13
Marcus Hooker	12	2	14	-	-
Shaun Wade	10	3	13	-	-
Jonathon Cooper	4	7	11	1.5-7	1.5-7
Josh Proctor	8	2	10	1-0.5	-
Marcus Williamson	7	2	9	-	-
Haskell Garrett	6	3	9	2-0-6	1-0.5
Dallas Gant	5	3	8	-	-
Seyn Banks	5	2	7	-	-
Zach Harrison	4	3	7	2.5-4	1.5-2
Teradja Mitchell	4	3	7	0.5-2	-
Craig Young	5	0	5	-	-
Tyler Friday	1	4	5	-	-
Javontae Jean-Baptiste	2	3	5	2.0-12	1-0.8
Jerron Cage	1	4	5	-	-
Tyreke Johnson	2	2	4	-	-
Antwan Jackson	1	3	4	-	-
Tyreke Smith	2	2	4	-	-
Ryan Watts	4	0	4	-	-
Taron Vincent	1	2	3	1-0-1	-
Justin Hilliard	2	1	3	-	-
Cade Stover	1	1	2	-	-
Lathan Ransom	2	0	2	-	-
TEAM	1	1	2	-	-
Ronnie Hickman	0	2	2	-	-
Chris Olave	2	0	2	-	-
Darrion Henry-Young	0	1	1	1-0-4	1-0-4
Cameron Brown	1	0	1	-	-
Cody Simon	1	0	1	-	-
Trayvon Wilburn	1	0	1	-	-
Chris Booker	1	0	1	-	-
Steele Chambers	1	0	1	-	-
Julian Fleming	1	0	1	-	-
K'Vaughan Pope	0	1	1	-	-
Bryson Shaw	0	1	1	-	-
Kamryn Babb	0	1	1	-	-
Xavier Johnson	0	1	1	-	-
OSU Totals	137	98	235	21-81	11-52
OPP Totals	180	114	294	25-103	12-71

Fumbles Forced: 4 – Gant, Werner, Hilliard, Fleming.

Fumbles Recovered: 7 – Banks, Proctor, Browning, Gant, Harrison, Hilliard, Munford.

OHIO STATE VS. INDIANA

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 42, Indiana 35

Ohio State senior linebacker Baron Browning on getting over the hurdle of beating a top-10 team in Indiana: "We knew Indiana was going to be a hard team to play. They play us hard every year. They're a great team. They've got a great quarterback. So it was definitely a big win. And I just feel like we've got to keep taking it one game at a time because we've still got Illinois, Michigan State, Michigan. It's the Big Ten, so we've just got to take it one game at a time and not try to look forward."

Ohio State junior quarterback Justin Fields when asked if he felt himself panicking into bad decisions against the Hoosiers' pressure: "I mean, of course I made bad decisions. I ended up with three picks. But we got the dub at the end of the day. That's all that matters. We got the dub. We're 4-0. Just going to go in and watch film tomorrow and continue to get better."

Indiana junior cornerback Jamar Johnson on what the Hoosiers did to force Fields to throw three interceptions: "We knew that the weeks prior that the teams that he's been playing, they've just been lining up into coverage and just showing him that same coverage that they're running, so it makes it easier on him to know where the holes are at in the defense. This week, we started showing (Cover) 2 and played (Cover) 3. Showed (Cover) 3 and played (Cover) 2, just messing up his reads. We were just trying to get to him that way because he mainly looks at one receiver really. He doesn't really go through his progressions that much. That's all we were doing. We were just disguising coverages."

Johnson on fumbling on his second interception return: "I was surprised. I didn't see him coming from behind me. I was trying to make a move, I was trying to get into the end zone. I don't know who it was, but I know they made a heck of a play when they came and popped it out. And that's on me. I've got to work on my ball security, and that will never happen again."

Indiana head coach Tom Allen on his team fumbling the ball in the red zone, which led to an Ohio State touchdown and a 28-7 halftime deficit for the Hoosiers: "I thought it was huge. We had a chance to go and score, and not only did we not score, they get the ball and then drive down the field and get all that momentum going into halftime. That was a pretty tough sequence of events there that you hate to have happen. But you've got to secure the football, got to do a better job of that offensively and punch it in when you're in the tight red zone like that. That was probably a pretty critical turning point in the game."

Indiana senior wide receiver Ty Fryfogle on the Hoosiers' message as a team at halftime that they were not going to give up: "We got in the locker room, we came together as a team and had a talk that we weren't going to lay down. And we came out fighting in the second half. We've just got to do better. We've got to play better."

Allen on the resilience his team showed in its comeback effort against a top-tier opponent such as Ohio State: "I'm so disappointed that we fell short but proud of the heart, the fight, the toughness of this team. They didn't quit, and you got a chance to see that they truly are special. We just have to play better, and you know, that's a really good football team we played. They're a substantially elevated level of play compared to the other teams we've played so far in so many different ways. For our guys to be able to put ourselves in that position, and obviously, give them credit for making plays, but we continued to battle to the very, very end."

Ohio State junior cornerback Shaun Wade on the Buckeyes' struggles in the second half: "The second half, it's not even just the secondary, it's the whole defense and the whole offense. I feel like in the second half, I don't know what it is, but we have to figure it out, especially in big games with competition just like we played right now. We can't be giving up points like that in the second half and not scoring in the second half."

Browning on his performance in pass coverage and the defense as a whole: "I've got some areas I can grow in the pass-coverage game. The one instance where they ran the little mesh route and No. 10 (David Ellis) got in the end zone – a little miscommunication between me and the safety on that. The pass game in general, we've got some things we can clean up. But I feel like each week we're getting better in that area and that's all that matters. How can we be better than we were last week in the passing game and just overall as a defense?"

Wade on how the defense prevents bad momentum when the opponent makes big plays against it: "It's a thing that Coach (Kerry) Coombs teaches us that he's got on the board. It's like, 'snap and clear.' So, whatever happens in that play, you just snap and clear, and go to the next play."

Wade on his interception he returned for a 36-yard touchdown: "The pick-six, watching film I just knew it was coming. They run out of that bunch, so I knew it was coming."

Indiana sophomore quarterback Michael Penix on his lone interception that Wade returned 36 yards for a touchdown: "Not a good throw. That's it."

Ohio State junior defensive tackle Tommy Togiai on Penix's ability to get rid of the ball and make plays against the Buckeye defense: "I think we had a good day, especially the D-line, getting to him. He was still just getting the ball off. I know he has that quick release with his throwing form, so I think it was just that quick release. He was still just getting it off, even though we were getting back there, so I think it was just that quick release he has."

Allen on the Hoosiers' missed tackles and difficulties with Fields: "The tackling was pretty apparent. It was not good. And a lot of them were on Justin Fields. He's so strong and quick and some of our best players consistently couldn't get him on the ground, which is disappointing and frustrating. That was part of it, and even wrapping up their big, strong backs."

Allen on closing the talent gap with the Buckeyes: "Well, obviously, the score is what matters. Even though we had a deficit, I thought the first half when we were getting the takeaways, if we could have gotten some momentum off of those and got some more points off of those, that would have been huge. There's no question the gap has been closed. We're not there yet. They still have a lot of elite players that make it very, very challenging, but we're working hard to continue to close that, and that's part of recruiting, it's player development."

"Since I've been here, we've never had a fourth-quarter game with these guys. We've played them well at times, even up to half-way through the third quarter my first year, but then it really got away from us in the fourth quarter quite a bit. But there's no consolation. We came here to win the game, and being close isn't good enough. We've just got to find a way to keep recruiting, keep developing and keep improving this football team so we can make those plays we've got to make to be able to win games like this."

Allen on Indiana's injury woes and how that impacted the game against the Buckeyes: "We're still not where we need to be yet, and we've got some key guys that weren't able to play today and hopefully we can get them back here in the near future."



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OPINION

Ohio State Less Than Perfect In Win Over Indiana

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

As Indiana headed into its top-10 showdown with Ohio State, I thought of former IU coach Lee Corso. Legend has it that when his down-trodden Hoosiers took a brief lead over Ohio State back in the '70s, he called timeout to have a picture taken with his team in front of the scoreboard to commemorate the moment.

With two weeks to build hype after the Buckeyes lost a game to COVID, all we heard was how good Indiana was. I was a nonbeliever, or at the least an honorary native of Missouri – show me! The Hoosiers were riding high based on victories over now discredited Penn State and Michigan, along with victories over Rutgers and Michigan State, downtrodden in their own right. Against Ohio State, Indiana was taking a step up in class.

Like Corso so many years before, they could bask in the moment of being talked about in the same breath as the Buckeyes. Just as the moment must have quickly faded in that long-past game with the Buckeyes (again, nobody knows if this really happened), I figured IU's moment would also fade in the near-empty Ohio Stadium as the rested Buckeyes romped to an easy victory.

I certainly wasn't dissuaded from this prediction when on the Hoosiers' opening drive they were forced to punt after five plays and the Buckeyes answered by marching 75 yards in two plays and just 33 seconds to take the early 7-0 lead.

But something funny happened on the way to the playoffs.

Even though the Buckeyes were able to take a 35-7 lead early in the third quarter, they never looked quite right, and then here came the Hoosiers, fighting and fighting right up until the final seconds of the game before falling 42-35.

While I admire their determination and their outstanding passing attack, the Hoosiers still lost. IU has played Ohio State tough any number of times in the past few years. With the program improving, however, at some point they must beat the Buckeyes.

Indiana is beyond the point of moral victories, and coach Tom Allen knows it.

"We came here to win the game, and being close isn't good enough," Allen said afterward. "We've just got to find a way to keep recruiting, keep developing, and keep improving this football team so we can make those plays we've got to make to be able to win games like this."

But we are not that concerned with Indiana here. This is an Ohio State newspaper.

And after the game we are left wondering how much credit to give IU for the close game and how much falls on the shoulders of the Buckeyes.

We learned on this Saturday that quarterback Justin Fields is human. He was only very good against the Hoosiers, as opposed to his usual brilliant. He was only 18 of 30 passing for 300 yards and two touchdowns with another 78 yards and a score on the ground. There was just that little matter of three interceptions, doubling his career total.

If there is any chink in Fields' armor, it is that he is slow to just throw the ball away or even tuck it and take a sack rather than fling the ball wildly in hopes of making a great play.

One of the posters on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum called it the Superman Complex, "thinking he can overcome any situation no matter how dire and still come out on top. This isn't high school where you can do that because you're a much better athlete than everyone around you," Bucks89 posted. "If it's not there, throw the ball away and live to play another down. He's trying too hard to make Heisman-like plays on every snap."

In reality, Indiana did nothing with the three

picks. The Hoosiers failed to get a first down after the first two and didn't even get a chance to run a play after the third. In one of the more important and heads-up plays of the game, freshman receiver Julian Fleming knocked the ball loose from Jamar Johnson on the INT return, and Thayer Munford fell on it at the OSU 16, negating a golden opportunity for the Hoosiers.

What Fields' interceptions did was, in the case of the first two at least, keep Ohio State from opportunities to blow the game open early and better take the starch out of the upstart Hoosiers.

But all of us know that Fields, and his interceptions, weren't the problem in this game. Despite losing the opportunities after the turnovers, he led the Buckeyes to a whopping 607 total yards – their highest output of the season – on an incredibly balanced 307 yards rushing and 300 passing. And you aren't going to lose a lot of games when you put 42 points on the scoreboard.

One way you lose while scoring 42 points, however, is to allow your opponent to pass for 491 yards and five touchdowns, including scoring tosses of 63, 33 and 56 yards, all to Ty Fryfogle. Sure, IU quarterback Michael Penix was outstanding, but he was certainly helped by the fact that his receivers were wide open much of the day. Fryfogle and Whop Philoyor combined for 13 catches, 274 yards and four touchdowns and lead the nation in best names for a receiving duo.

Again, you've got to ask how much credit goes to Indiana and how much blame goes to the Ohio State secondary. You can't minimize the performance of Penix and his receivers, but you must acknowledge that they were exploiting a glaring weakness on the part of the Buckeyes.

It was a little too reminiscent of the 2018 season, when a porous defense marred an otherwise outstanding 13-1 campaign and, for all intents and purposes, kept the offensively explosive Buckeyes from making a run at the national title.

"If we don't give up the big plays, we probably run away with this game," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said after the win. "The good news is, we obviously stopped the run. There was no run game at all. It was all passing. We're going to go back, watch the film and figure out where these issues are that are creating these big plays. When you stop the big plays, you'll be in pretty good shape. We have to get that changed."

More good news is that the other area of perceived weakness for the Buckeyes, the run game, was much improved against the Hoosiers. Master Teague helped the Buckeyes rack up their 307 yards rushing with his 26 carries for 169 yards and two TDs, including a 41-yard scoring bolt.

However, as I am sure I have said in this space before, I don't understand why the coaches don't just settle on a starting back, and that would appear to be Teague, assuming his ankle is OK after rolling it against the Hoosiers. Not that Trey Sermon didn't perform well against IU. He had nine carries for 60 yards and a fine 6.7-yard average.

But I have always felt that running backs and their offensive line need to get in a rhythm, and it's hard to develop that rhythm if you keep rotating backs.

"I think I did get in a good groove today," Teague said after the game. "Overall, I feel like I

got in a good groove and was able to make plays and help the team win and come to a victory, so I feel good about that."

He was able to get in a groove because he carried the ball 26 times.

Still, after Teague scored his long touchdown, it was Sermon who came out for the Buckeyes on their next series. He did fine with 23 yards on his first two carries of the possession, but at some point you have to decide on the lead dog. It is no coincidence that the recently departed J.K. Dobbins had his least dynamic year in 2018, when he had to share the ball more evenly with Mike Weber.

Picky, picky, Frank.

Finally, on the tight end watch, there was nary a reception by that position group against IU, though Jeremy Ruckert had a key block on Teague's long touchdown run.

In summary, Ohio State proved once again in its win over IU that it is still the class of the Big Ten. Are the Buckeyes ready for a playoff run? After that defensive performance, I wonder.

About That Picture

As for Corso and that picture, which presumably have been taken in 1976 when the Hoosiers took a 7-6 lead early in the second quarter of what would end up a 47-7 Buckeye victory, I found this note from Brad Cook, curator of photographs at the IU archives, from 2017.

"At present no photograph can be found of Lee Corso with the entire team in front of the scoreboard after IU took a 7-6 lead in the second quarter of this game. A player, who wants to remain anonymous, told me that the photograph was not taken."

Epic Anniversary Battle

For the week of Nov. 14-20, there were two games that were so big that we had to include them as part of Buckeye Sports Bulletin's 40th Anniversary Football Season.

That week, the Buckeyes not only suffered the last-second loss to Iowa in 1987 that cost Earle Bruce his job, a game which we chronicled in our last issue, but they also faced Michigan in the epic battle between the No. 1 and No. 2 teams in the nation, featured in this issue and scheduled to be featured as part of Reprint Thursdays on BuckeyeSports.com on Thanksgiving Day.

How big was that game?

Here's what former BSB editor Jeff Svoboda said in the Nov. 18, 2006, preview of the game:

"As hard as it is to believe, there is almost no way the Nov. 18 contest between Ohio State and Michigan can be overhyped.

"The rivalry, consistently ranked the best in all of sports, has always had a major impact on the national picture but rarely like this. Only three have both teams been undefeated heading into the showdown, and in just two of those have the teams been undefeated and untied."

In that same issue, BSB managing editor Mark Rea further set the stage:

"In a rivalry that stretches back more than a century, and one that has featured championship implications on countless occasions, Ohio State and Michigan enter into an epic battle featuring historic storylines.

"Never before have two Big Ten teams met on the field of battle sporting 11-0 records. Never before have the Buckeyes and Wolverines played one another as the nation's top two ranked teams. Only twice before (1970 and

1973) have the teams faced one another with unblemished records.

"Tickets – if you can find any – start around \$500 for the nosebleed sections in Ohio Stadium. Want to get closer to the action? Be prepared to double or triple that amount."

Even more drama was added to the battle when legendary Michigan coach Bo Schembechler passed away the day before The Game. I can remember the concern among Buckeye fans that the Wolverines would benefit from a "Win one for the Gipper" effect.

It was not in the cards for the Wolverines, however. But I did note the irony of the Buckeyes' 42-39 victory in this space.

"There's a certain irony in the fact that the Ohio State-Michigan game played upon the death of legendary coach Bo Schembechler was a 42-39 offensive outburst," I wrote in the Nov. 25, 2006, issue of BSB.

"In the storied 'Ten-Year War' between Schembechler and OSU's legendary Woody Hayes, the teams never combined to score more than 36 points – three less than the losers' total in the 2006 game – and that 36-point outburst came in the first game between the two coaching titans, Michigan's well chronicled 24-12 upset of the Buckeyes in 1969. That game in '69 helped set the tone for the Hayes-Schembechler rivalry, which helped ramp up an already intense rivalry to what it is today. While defense was the order of the day in those great games, offense took center stage in this latest, and perhaps biggest, edition of The Game.

"Not only did the two teams combine for 81 points, but they also marched up and down the field to the tune of 900 yards of total offense, with an un-Ohio State-Michigan-like 583 of those yards coming through the air."

Michigan's Chad Henne was 21 of 35 for 267 yards and two touchdowns, which at that stage of the rivalry would have been considered an outstanding passing performance.

But this was Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith's game, just as the two previous Michigan games had been.

"While Henne was brilliant at times, he was one-upped by Troy Smith, arguably the greatest quarterback in OSU-Michigan history," I wrote.

"The senior from Cleveland Glenville threw for 316 yards and four touchdowns, and in a game of relentless pass rushes, he was sacked just once to four times for Henne. Smith, who gained 328 yards, now has the three highest marks in total offense against Michigan in OSU annals."

With Smith at the helm, throwing to such talented receivers as Ted Ginn Jr., Anthony Gonzalez, Brian Robiskie and even current Buckeye receivers coach Brian Hartline, the notoriously conservative Jim Tressel had opened up the Buckeye offense in 2006.

"Let the Buckeyes loose is pretty much what Tressel and company did this season, and the result was an 11-0 record coming into the Michigan game," I noted. "There was always a chance, however, that Tressel would revert to his early Ohio State offensive shell against the Wolverines."

"Any fears of that were allayed when the Buckeyes came out firing on their first drive, calling 12 pass plays on a 14-play scoring march to knot the game at 7. The offensive fireworks were on."

The win clinched Ohio State's spot in the BCS national championship game, where it was possible that the Buckeyes' opponent might be the same Wolverines. As it turned out, the Buckeyes faced Urban Meyer's Florida team, and we all know what happened there.

But that's a story for another time. Right now, let's enjoy that great win over Michigan.