

Revisiting Ohio State's Previous Five Trips To Minnesota — Part Two



Ohio State begins its season against Minnesota on Thursday. It will be the sixth time the Buckeyes have played the Golden Gophers in Minneapolis since 2000.

To count down the days until kickoff, Buckeye Sports Bulletin will revisit Ohio State's past five road trips to the Twin Cities, detailing each game's defining moments as well as its box scores and statistics.

Game 2 - Oct. 29, 2005

Ohio State 45 - Minnesota 31

The headline: Running Back Goes Off As Buckeyes Throttle Gophers, 45-31, In The Dome

Ohio State (7-2, 4-2) defeated Minnesota (5-4, 2-4) behind impressive offensive performances from junior quarterback Troy Smith and sophomore running back Antonio Pittman. Smith completed 14 of 20 passes for 233 yards and three touchdowns, and Pittman carried the ball 23 times for 186 yards and two touchdowns.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin managing editor Mark Rea wrote:

Ohio State's Big Ten battle Oct. 29 against Minnesota pitted the nation's No. 1 rushing defense against the country's best rushing offense, trench warfare that was a throwback to the days when the conference championships were won and lost on the ground.

But for all of the fancy passing offense of today — and OSU quarterback Troy Smith and Minnesota counterpart Bryan Cupito combined to throw for 629 yards — at the heart of the Buckeyes' 45-31 victory was a re-emerging running attack led by sophomore tailback Antonio Pittman.

Going head-to-head with Laurence Maroney — the Gophers' star tailback who entered the game No. 3 in the nation with a 161.9-rushing yard per game average — Pittman took over the spotlight for himself, running for a career-high 186 yards and two touchdowns as the Buckeyes flexed their muscles and kept pace in the Big Ten championship game.

Here's what happened in the game:

Ohio State started the game with the football, scoring quickly as Smith connected with wide receiver Santonio Holmes for a 41-yard touchdown pass.

The Buckeye defense made a stop on the Gophers' first offensive possession. Ohio State started its next drive on its 34-yard line. Smith and company steadily moved the ball into Minnesota territory, but the team stalled and settled for a 31-yard field goal from Josh Huston.

Minnesota struck back in its next possession, using a six-play, 80-yard drive that only took 1:53 off the clock and ended with a Maroney 1-yard touchdown run.

Ohio State 10 - Minnesota 7

As he did many times in his career, wide receiver Ted Ginn Jr. made a significant special teams play during the game. Ginn Jr. took Minnesota's next kickoff 100 yards to the end zone. He only required 13 seconds to run from one goal line to the other.

Ohio State 17 - Minnesota 7

Minnesota would use its next possession to score three points from a Jason Giannini 30-yard field goal at the end of the first quarter.

After Ohio State couldn't extend its lead at the beginning of the second quarter, the Golden Gophers drove down the field and added more points. Cupito found wide receiver Jared Ellerson from five yards out to tie the game.

Ohio State 17 - Minnesota 17

Pittman exploded for a 67-yard touchdown to open Ohio State's first possession of the second half. He burst through a hole in the Minnesota defense and found daylight.

"As soon as Rob (Sims) pulled and moved that guy out of the way, all I had to do was split the safeties," Pittman said. "As soon as I split them, I knew they weren't catching me."

Ohio State 24 - Minnesota 17

Ohio State extended its lead to 14 points after Smith found wide receiver Anthony Gonzalez left open behind the Gopher defense. In the middle of the third quarter, the pair connected on a 27-yard touchdown pass that capped a seven-play, 68-yard drive.

Ohio State 31 - Minnesota 17

After Minnesota second-string tailback Gary Russell punched in his first touchdown of the night from 1-yard out, the Buckeye offense retook the field with field position inside of Gopher territory. The six-play, 37-yard drive ended with Pittman finding paydirt for the second time — this run from 4 yards out.

The Buckeyes found the end zone for the final time via Holmes' second touchdown catch of the night after Smith connected with him from 30 yards out.

Ohio State 45 - Minnesota 24

The Golden Gophers would put the game's final points on the board from Russell's second rushing touchdown with less than a minute remaining, but it proved to be too little too late for Minnesota. Ohio State would walk away from Minneapolis with a 14 point victory.

Final: Ohio State 45 - Minnesota 31

Team Statistics (Final)
 2005 Ohio State Football
 #12 Ohio State vs #22 Minnesota (Oct 29, 2005 at Minneapolis, Minn.)

	OSU	MINN
FIRST DOWNS.....	22	23
Rushing.....	9	9
Passing.....	13	14
Penalty.....	0	0
NET YARDS RUSHING.....	216	182
Rushing Attempts.....	43	42
Average Per Rush.....	5.0	4.3
Yards Gained Rushing.....	235	188
Yards Lost Rushing.....	19	6
NET YARDS PASSING.....	233	396
Completions-Attempts-Int....	14-20-0	26-36-0
Average Per Attempt.....	11.6	11.0
Average Per Completion.....	16.6	15.2
TOTAL OFFENSE YARDS.....	449	578
Total offense plays.....	63	78
Average Gain Per Play.....	7.1	7.4
Fumbles: Number-Lost.....	0-0	1-1
Penalties: Number-Yards.....	4-30	6-50
PUNTS-YARDS.....	4-135	4-153
Average Yards Per Punt.....	33.8	38.2
Net Yards Per Punt.....	22.2	27.8
Inside 20.....	1	0
50+ Yards.....	0	1
Touchbacks.....	1	0
Fair catch.....	0	1
KICKOFFS-YARDS.....	8-520	5-260
Average Yards Per Kickoff...	65.0	52.0
Net Yards Per Kickoff.....	45.0	19.6
Touchbacks.....	8	0
Punt returns: Number-Yards-TD.	2-42-0	2-26-0
Average Per Return.....	21.0	13.0
Kickoff returns: Number-Yds-TD	5-162-1	0-0-0
Average Per Return.....	32.4	0.0
Interceptions: Number-Yds-TD..	0-0-0	0-0-0
Fumble Returns: Number-Yds-TD.	0-0-0	0-0-0
Miscellaneous Yards.....	0	0
Possession Time.....	31:26	28:34
1st Quarter.....	5:45	9:15
2nd Quarter.....	8:39	6:21
3rd Quarter.....	7:06	7:54
4th Quarter.....	9:56	5:04
Third-Down Conversions.....	3 of 10	6 of 15
Fourth-Down Conversions.....	1 of 2	0 of 2
Red-Zone Scores-Chances.....	2-2	5-6
Sacks By: Number-Yards.....	0-0	1-9
PAT Kicks.....	6-6	4-4
Field Goals.....	1-1	1-2

Passing leaders:

Troy Smith (OSU): 14-20, 233 yards, 3 TDs

Bryan Cupito (MINN): 26-35, 396 yards, 1 TD

Rushing leaders:

Antonio Pittman (OSU): 23 car, 186 yards, 2 TDs

Laurence Maroney (MINN): 25 car, 133 yards, 1 TD

Receiving leaders:

Santonio Holmes (OSU): 4 rec, 94 yards, 2 TDs

Jared Ellerson (MINN): 5 rec, 113 yards, 1 TD

Leading Tacklers:

Donte Whitner (OSU): 10 tackles, 8 solo, 2 assists

John Shelvin (MINN): 8 tackles, 6 solo, 2 assists