

Taking A Look At Ohio State's Recent Record Against The SEC



On June 18, Ohio State announced that it and Alabama had come to terms for a landmark home-and-home series for the 2027 and 2028 seasons. The series will serve as a first in quite a few ways, including Ohio State's first home-and-home with an SEC opponent since 1987 and 1988, its first game against an SEC team since 2015, and its first matchup with the Tide since that battle in the 2014 playoff, though the latter two notes depend largely on what happens in the postseason in the coming years.

"We'd like to thank University of Alabama Director of Athletics Greg Byrne and Senior Deputy Director of Athletics Finus Gaston, who worked so hard with us to get this series scheduled," Diana Sabau, Ohio State Deputy Director of Athletics, said in a statement. "Building a non-conference schedule with tradition-rich programs is important to the competitive excellence of our program and the department, and it is great for our fans. We are excited for both schools and pleased to be able to share in this announcement today with the University of Alabama."

Regardless of that, a regular season battle between two teams of this stature, especially from the Big Ten and SEC specifically, has been very rare in recent years. The Big Ten has often found series partners from the Big 12 and Pac-12 but rarely from the Southeastern part of the country, while the SEC has focused primarily on taking on the ACC and the Big 12, mostly avoiding trips to the North.

Few teams have played closer to that than the Crimson Tide, who, since 1980, have played just seven games on the road in the regular season against a Big Ten school, six of which came against Penn State and Rutgers when both schools were Independent. The only game Alabama has had on the road in the regular season against a Big Ten school, while that school was actually in the conference, in the last 40 years, was against Penn State in 2011, a 27-11 win for Alabama. Two neutral site games, against Michigan in 2012 and Wisconsin in 2015, are also worth mentioning.

For the most part, Alabama has been very content sticking close to the South, and, when needed, facing

off with foes from the North in a neutral site rather than a two-game series, making this upcoming bout with the Buckeyes that much more exciting.

Ohio State, to be fair to Alabama, hasn't had much more interest in regular season contests with SEC foes since 1980. Ohio State has played just four regular season games against SEC opponents in that time frame, and only one in SEC country, against LSU in 1987, a 13-13 tie. The other three games were either at home, in the case of LSU 1988, a 36-33 win for Ohio State, and Missouri (wasn't in the SEC at the time) 1998, a 35-14 OSU win, or at a neutral site, like Alabama in 1986, a 16-10 loss for the Buckeyes.

Outside of the regular season, Ohio State has met with a southern opponent in 12 bowl games, including two national championships, three Citrus Bowls, three Sugar Bowls, one Cotton Bowl (Texas A&M was in the Big 12 at the time, same for the 1999 Sugar Bowl), one Hall of Fame Bowl, and one Outback Bowl and one very sad Gator Bowl. In those games, the Buckeyes are 4-8, with the biggest win coming against Alabama in that most recent playoff matchup, 42-35.

Of the 16 total matchups with current SEC opponents since 1980, Ohio State sits at a respectable 6-9-1, including a 4-4 record since that Missouri game in 1998. During that time, the Buckeyes have faced off with LSU and Alabama the most, three times a piece, taking a 1-1-1 record against the Tigers and a 1-2 record against the Crimson Tide. Texas A&M and Florida are up next with two games a piece, the former seeing Ohio State win both games and the latter seeing the Buckeyes lose both.

When Ohio State takes the field against Alabama in 2027 and 2028, it will have the chance to narrow the margin between OSU and the SEC in the last several decades, and with some help from postseason matchups between 2020 and 2027, the Buckeyes could even be in position to turn that losing record into a winning record by the time Alabama takes a very rare trip to the North.