

Three Questions Answered: Michigan State



Ohio State jumped on Michigan State from the opening whistle to leave East Lansing, Mich., with a 49-20 win over the Spartans. While the Buckeyes handed the Spartans their fourth-straight loss, Ohio State answered all three questions posed by BSB prior to Saturday's contest.

1. How Will Ohio State Handle The Hostile Environment?

As the Buckeyes took to the road for the first time this season, Ohio State was tasked with adjusting to the hostile environment at Spartan Stadium.

Early on, it appeared that the new setting gave the Buckeyes pause. On the opening kickoff, kicker Jayden Fielding pooched the ball out of bounds — marking the third time he's done so this season. Later in the quarter, quarterback C.J. Stroud and wide receiver Emeka Egbuka became the victims of miscommunication as Stroud looked to find Egbuka on a hitch route, but Egbuka instead adjusted his route which caused Stroud to find Michigan State cornerback Charles Brantley — who took the interception 32 yards for Michigan State's first score of the day.

From that point, though, Ohio State settled in. The Buckeyes produced 614 yards of total offense while the defense flustered Michigan State's offense — allowing just 202 total yards and seven rushing yards.

2. How Will OSU's Secondary Play Against Michigan State's Passing Attack?

Entering Saturday's contest it appeared that Michigan State's passing attack would be the biggest challenge faced by the Buckeyes to this point in the season.

Based on quarterback Payton Thorne's first throw of the afternoon, it appeared those concerns were justified as Thorne found his favorite target in wideout Jayden Reed for a gain of 20 yards. But, that narrative was flipped on its on his very next throw. Thorne, again, looked Reed's way, but this time he looked for paydirt. While Reed seemingly had a step on a pair of Ohio State defenders, safety Lathan Ransom showcased his closing speed and corraled an interception.

Thorne finished the afternoon with a 61 percent completion percentage, 113 yards, a touchdown and the aforementioned interception. While Thorne's numbers were not eye-popping, there were still some areas of concern among the Ohio State secondary.

Most notably, graduate cornerback Cameron Brown — who missed Ohio State's last two games while nursing an injury — was called for a trio of penalties. Brown tallied a pair of pass interference calls, one of which was declined due to Reed corraling a 24-yard completion with Brown draped over him, and a horse-collar tackle while gifting Michigan State 30 free yards on their first-half touchdown drive.

3. How Will C.J. Stroud Bounce Back From His Outing Against Rutgers?

It's safe to say that Stroud returned to form against the Spartans.

While Stroud posted career lows in yards and completion percentage against Rutgers, he was dominant against Michigan State. The third-year quarterback completed 21 of 26 attempts for 361 yards and six touchdowns against the Spartans.

He unloaded three of his touchdown passes to Marvin Harrison Jr. and one each to Emeka Egbuka, Julian Fleming and Gee Scott Jr. Stroud completed passes to seven different targets and tossed a long of 69-yards, which came on a catch-and-run touchdown to Egbuka.