

Welcome To Week 8: Penn State



It may have been hard to tell at points on Saturday, but Ohio State's opponent - the Iowa Hawkeyes - was among the nation's best defenses. It looked like it at times, especially when Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud got strip-sacked early on for a touchdown, but the 54-10 final score is a much better indicator of the impact of Iowa's defense that allowed four second-half touchdowns.

Ohio State was sluggish in the game's early stages coming off the off week, but by the contest's end, the Buckeyes looked every bit the No. 2 team in the country. That sets the stage for Ohio State's next matchup, which is a road trip to face No. 13 Penn State.

Check back every Monday at BuckeyeSports.com for a brief preview of the Buckeyes' upcoming opponent, with stories and features throughout the week.

OPPONENT: Penn State Nittany Lions (6-1, 3-1 Big Ten)

Penn State's hallmark has been on defense this season, because while the Nittany Lions are allowing 373.0 yards per game - 63rd in the country - they are also allowing just 18.9 points per game, which is 20th among all teams. While the secondary hasn't quite lived up to its billing with cornerbacks Ji'Ayir Brown and Joey Porter Jr. among several returning starters, the heart of the defense has been at linebacker.

Curtis Jacobs, Tyler Elsdon and freshman Abdul Carter have been dominant in the middle of the field, combing for 92 tackles (9.5 for loss), 2.5 sacks and three pass breakups while helping limit opposing offenses to 140.1 rushing yards per game.

There have been more questions on offense for the Nittany Lions, who are operating with sixth-year quarterback and three-year starter Sean Clifford. In seven games this season, Clifford is completing just 61.5 percent of his passes (115 of 187) and averaging just a touch over 200 passing yards per game. The offense has struggled in games against Northwestern (a 17-7 win) and Michigan (a 41-17 loss), averaging just 628 total yards across both contests, and the running game has also disappeared at times.

With a slightly more balanced team than Ohio State is used to running into this season, the Buckeyes could be in for one of the more significant tests so far this year, especially with the contest being on the road.

GAME INFO: Beaver Stadium in College Park, Pa., 12 p.m., FOX

Penn State opted to forgo the usual “White Out” for Ohio State, instead opting to use that for the Nittany Lions’ win over Minnesota this past week. That moves them to a 10-8 record all-time in “White Out” games, but the Buckeyes will avoid that this year. Instead, this contest will kick off at noon sharp from Beaver Stadium.

SERIES HISTORY: This will be the 37th meeting between Ohio State and Penn State. The Buckeyes have a 22-14 advantage in the series that has been played every season dating back to 1993.

Ohio State is currently on a five-game winning streak against the Nittany Lions and has won nine of the last 10, with the lone loss coming at Penn State on Oct. 22, 2016, in which the Nittany Lions returned a blocked field goal attempt for a touchdown in a 24-21 win.

This will be the first trip for Ohio State to Penn State with fans in attendance since 2018, a 27-26 win for the Buckeyes.

Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Result
Sept. 3	Notre Dame	Columbus, Ohio	W 21-10
Sept. 10	Arkansas State	Columbus, Ohio	W 45-12
Sept. 17	Toledo	Columbus, Ohio	W 77-21
Sept. 24	Wisconsin	Columbus, Ohio	W 52-21
Oct. 1	Rutgers	Columbus, Ohio	W 49-10
Oct. 8	Michigan State	East Lansing, Mich.	W 49-20
Oct. 22	Iowa	Columbus, Ohio	W, 54-10
Oct. 29	Penn State	State College, Pa.	12 p.m., FOX
Nov. 5	Northwestern	Evanston, Ill.	TBD
Nov. 12	Indiana	Columbus, Ohio	TBD
Nov. 19	Maryland	College Park, Md.	TBD
Nov. 26	Michigan	Columbus, Ohio	12 p.m., FOX
Dec. 3	Big Ten Championship	Indianapolis, Ind.	8 p.m. FOX