

Welcome To Week 9: Northwestern



It's time to come down after one of the craziest games in recent Ohio State memory. The Buckeyes erased an early deficit to Penn State on Oct. 29 before exploding for 28 points in the fourth quarter, eventually taking home the 44-31 win at Beaver Stadium

J.T. Tuimoloau was the star for Ohio State, finishing with six tackles (three for loss), two sacks, two interceptions - one that was returned for a touchdown - a forced fumble and subsequent recovery, and a pass breakup that was tipped into the hands of defensive end Zach Harrison for an interception.

After that exciting game, the mood comes back down to Earth. Ohio State - now 8-0 on the season with a 5-0 mark in Big Ten play - will stay on the road to face Northwestern.

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

OPPONENT: Northwestern Wildcats (1-7, 1-4 Big Ten)

It all looked so good for Northwestern. The Wildcats won their season-opening game - in Dublin, Ireland, no less - over Nebraska, and it looked as if things might just be OK.

Alas, the Wildcats have since lost seven games this season, sitting with a measly 1-7 record and a 1-4 mark in the conference. Northwestern is on pace for by far its worst season under head coach Pat Fitzgerald, who has never finished with fewer than three wins in his 24 seasons as the Wildcats' head coach.

Northwestern has struggles on both sides of the ball, averaging just 17.9 points per game behind a rotating quarterback carousel and struggling rushing attack, and allowing 28.8 points and 407.1 total yards per game. The defense has some individual playmakers in linebackers Bryce Gallagher and Xander Mueller, as well as several experienced options in the secondary, but little has come together for the Wildcats this year.

The bright side is that of their seven losses, four have been by just one possession. The bad news is that

two of those were to FCS-level Southern Illinois and Miami (Ohio) from the MAC, teams who do not have a storied tradition of knocking off Big Ten teams. None of this bodes well for their game against Ohio State.

GAME INFO: Ryan Field in Evanston, Ill., 12 p.m., ABC

This will be Ohio State's third consecutive noon kickoff after playing mostly in the afternoon or evening through the first five games of the season. Additionally, this game will be kicking off at noon Eastern but at 11 a.m. local time.

SERIES HISTORY: This will be the 80th meeting between Ohio State and Northwestern. The Buckeyes have a 64-14-1 advantage in the series dating back to 1913.

Ohio State is currently on a nine-game winning streak against the Wildcats, with the last loss coming on the road on Oct. 2, 2004, in a 33-27 defeat. Otherwise, the Buckeyes have won 33 of the last 34 games between these teams, including two of the last three in the Big Ten Championship Game.

Just one other game in this series has been played on Nov. 5. It was back in 1932, when the Buckeye took a 20-6 win at Northwestern.

| 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. | W, 44-31 |
| Nov. 5 | Northwestern | Evanston, Ill. | 12 p.m., ABC |
| 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 |