

What We Learned: Ohio State Downs Oregon State 77-31



On offense and defense, good and bad, Ohio State revealed plenty Saturday at Ohio Stadium throughout its 77-31 rout of Oregon State.

As expected, the No. 5 Buckeyes (1-0) ultimately proved too much for the Beavers (0-1). However, several observations stood out in the season opener.

Among them, which were the biggest? BSB takes a closer look.

1. There is plenty to take away from Ohio State's big win over Oregon State, but first is that the Buckeyes have some questions to answer defensively. While the Ohio State offense thrived, the Buckeyes' defense looked out of sorts more often than not, allowing three touchdowns of 49 yards or more. With junior defensive linemen Nick Bosa and Dre'Mont Jones out for the entire second half, the Ohio State defense was shredded for scoring plays of 80 and 78 yards, respectively, as the linebackers looked out of position and the secondary, particularly the safeties, looked flat-footed. Without junior safety Jordan Fuller, who dressed but did not play due to a hamstring issue, sophomores Jahsen Wint and Isaiah Pryor got the nod. But between the two Buckeyes and Ohio State's linebackers, the overall defense got exposed on several big plays and led to the Beavers breaking the 30-point plateau.
2. Meanwhile, Ohio State's offense, as orchestrated by acting head coach Ryan Day, looked unstoppable. Sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins looked every bit like an All-American quarterback, showing poise in the pocket and displaying his big arm on multiple throws over the middle and outside the hash-marks as well on his way to five touchdown passes. Adding in the play of running backs Mike Weber and J.K. Dobbins, who combined for 260 yards on 35 carries, the Buckeyes looked like a well-oiled machine. Ohio State won't want to have to get into shoot-outs, however, as the competition level heightens and the season rolls on. That said, there is plenty to work on before Rutgers comes to town next week.
3. While the NCAA changed its rule on kickoffs, which allows fair catches to start offensive drives at the 25-yard line, Ohio State's approach remains the same. Under head coach Urban Meyer, the Buckeyes have been intent over the years on kicking between the hash and sideline inside the 10-yard line. The philosophy remained for Ohio State as sophomore kicker Blake Haubeil booted kickoffs into the preferred area, where Oregon State often settled for fair catches. Haubeil had 12 kickoffs and averaged 57.8 yards with six touchbacks. As for Ohio State, the Buckeyes often

deferred to start their offensive drives at the 25-yard line. Fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon and junior wide receiver C.J. Saunders started, but neither attempted a return. Sophomore H-back Demario McCall took out Ohio State's only attempt on a 26-yard gain.

4. Despite an hour-plus delay due to inclement weather at halftime, the Buckeyes certainly didn't lack energy when they finally emerged from the locker room and resumed action in the third quarter. On the first play from scrimmage, Ohio State opened with a catch-and-run score from Haskins to fifth-year senior wide receiver Terry McLaurin, who took a crossing pass 75 yards to the house. The Beavers responded with a big-play run of their own in the ensuing drive, but the Buckeyes got the ball back and struck again when they marched 75 yards down the field in 10 plays and 2:31, culminated by fifth-year senior H-back Parris Campbell's motion across and touch pass from Haskins for an eight-yard touchdown. Ohio State had every reason to come out flat after the long delay, but the Buckeyes — at least on offense — continued their momentum into the second half.
5. Earlier in the week, Day mentioned that Tate Martell wouldn't operate Ohio State's offense out of special packages. The redshirt freshman, however, didn't do much outside of inside runs. He entered in the second quarter and started a drive for two plays, but exited after a pair of zone reads stalled the Buckeye and led to Haskins' return on third down. Martell returned in the fourth quarter before he finished 3 for 4 with 33 yards through the air, plus two carries for four yards on the ground. The offensive plan between him and Haskins, however, appeared to be night and day.

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