

BSB Reprints: Buckeyes, Hoosiers Battled As Ranked Teams Recently



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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

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Ohio State Survives Scare From Indiana

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A win over the ninth-ranked team in the country would usually be cause for celebration. But following Ohio State's 42-35 victory against Indiana on Nov. 21 - which gave the Buckeyes sole possession of first place in the Big Ten's East Division - head coach Ryan Day seemed unsatisfied.

"I thought the start of the game was ridiculous," Day said after the game. "The energy that we came out with was as good as I've seen all year. We played really, really well in the first half. We really dominated."

"But then we gave up some big plays and let them back into the game. We have to figure out a way to close out games. This is the second game in a row now where we let a team hang around a little bit, and we have to get that fixed."

Ohio State's much-maligned defense was impressive in the first two quarters, holding Indiana to just seven points and minus-6 yards rushing.

The offense also put up 28 first-half points despite a pair of uncharacteristic first-quarter interceptions from quarterback Justin Fields, giving the Buckeyes a comfortable halftime lead.

The final two frames were a different story, however. The Hoosiers outscored the Buckeyes 28-14 and had the ball late in the fourth quarter with the chance to score the game-tying touchdown - or possibly the game-winning score, had they gone for two - in the final minute.

"I'm definitely not pleased," Day said. "A long way from pleased. We've got a long ways to go. But we've only played four games and it's almost Thanksgiving. It's bizarre. There's just so much that has gone into this season and so much these kids have been through. To the average person, they don't quite get that part of it."

"When you're in an environment like this and there's no fans and you have to bring your own energy, it's just a different dynamic. That's why you're seeing so many strange things that have gone on this year. I'm not making excuses. I'm just calling it for what it is. We have to keep growing and getting better and learn to adapt to this environment. It seems to me, whatever the reason is, we haven't been able to finish the last two games."



COURTESY OF THE OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

ON AND OFF AFTERNOON - Quarterback Justin Fields, left, accounted for 378 yards of total offense and three touchdowns in Ohio State's 42-35 win over Indiana but also threw three interceptions to match his previous career total.

Quarterback Michael Penix deserved a lot of credit for Indiana's second-half comeback, as he completed 27 of 51 passes for 491 yards and five touchdowns compared to just one interception.

His 491 passing yards were the fourth most in a game against Ohio State, with only Illinois' Dave Wilson (621 yards in 1980), Purdue's Scott Campbell (516 yards in 1981) and Purdue's Jim Everett (497 yards in 1985) having a better output. Interestingly, the Buckeyes are now 4-0 in those games.

"People have their opinions and didn't think we belonged on the same field with Ohio State," Indiana head coach Tom Allen said after the game. "I didn't really agree with that, but until you prove it on the field, it doesn't really matter what I think."

"We're showing that we're a good football team.

We're a really good football team. It's about continuing to show and prove on the field that we're one of the top programs in the Big Ten. We haven't been that in the past for a long time, and that's our goal. That's how we want to be, and I believe we're getting closer and closer all the time."

Hoosiers senior wide receiver Ty Fryfogle was the primary beneficiary of Penix's big day, catching seven passes for 218 yards and three touchdowns.

It was his second straight game with at least 200 yards receiving, a first in Big Ten history, and the second-most receiving yards ever surrendered in a single game by the Buckeyes, trailing only Clemson wide receiver Sammy Watkins, who caught 16 passes for 227

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There is a tremendous amount of excitement surrounding Ohio State's upcoming game with Indiana because the usually lowly Hoosiers will be coming into Ohio Stadium as one of the top five teams in the country, with Ohio State at No. 2. There is a feeling in the football world that this is a rarity. While that is true, the Buckeyes and Hoosiers met as highly ranked teams as recently as 2020, when Ohio State was ranked No. 3 and IU No. 9. For this edition of Reprint Thursday we look back at that game, played in Ohio Stadium against the backdrop of the pandemic.

The game proved to be worthy of a top-10 matchup with the Buckeyes jumping out to a 35-7 lead early in the third quarter before holding on for dear life and a 42-35 victory. The Hoosiers had two possessions to try to tie the game up or even win it in the final 4:39 but were unable to close the gap.

"I thought the start of the game was ridiculous," OSU coach Ryan Day said. "The energy that we came out with was as good as I've seen all year. We played really, really well in the first half. We really dominated.

"But then we gave up some big plays and let them back into the game. We have to figure out a way to close out games. This is the second game in a row now where we let a team hang around a little bit, and we have to get that fixed."

Indiana was led in the game and the final surge by quarterback Michael Penix, who was 27 of 51 passing for 491 yards and five touchdowns.

Ohio State was led by Master Teague, who had 26 carries for 169 yards and a pair of scores. The final margin of victory was provided by Shaun Wade, who returned an interception 36 yards for a touchdown late in the third quarter to make the score 42-21.

The following stories are reprinted from the Nov. 28, 2020, issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin