

BSB Staffers Forsee A Successful Duck Hunt For Buckeyes



Chase Brown: Stadium Atmosphere Powers Win

657. Ohio Stadium hasn't held fans since Nov. 23, 2019 - 657 days ago - when No. 2 Ohio State defeated No. 10 Penn State 28-17 to claim the Big Ten East title. The following week, the Buckeyes traveled to Ann Arbor, Michigan, for "The Game" before heading to Indianapolis for the Big Ten Championship against Wisconsin.

After Ohio State claimed the conference title, they faced Clemson in the CFP semifinal at The Fiesta Bowl. Last season, Ohio State played eight games against six Big Ten opponents, Clemson and Alabama.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, none of the regular season games against conference opponents had fans in the stands, and the CFP games had limited attendance.

When Ohio State hosts Oregon on Saturday, it will play in front of at least 100,000 fans in the Horseshoe. A significant increase from some-5,000 family members and select media members who attended games last season.

While the noon kickoff doesn't cultivate the most exciting atmosphere, save for the Michigan game, the Buckeyes will receive a sizable home-field advantage that will power them over the Ducks.

As far as the game is concerned, Stroud will look more comfortable in his second start. Miyan Williams and TreVeyon Henderson will earn most of the carries. Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave will put together impressive performances for the NFL scouts to drool over. Maybe Jeremy Ruckert catches a few passes. Who knows?

Ohio State's defense will allow some chunk plays during the game, but Oregon's offense isn't explosive enough to keep up with the Buckeye offense for a full 60 minutes.

Ohio State 42, Oregon 24

Wyatt Crosher: Ohio State Survives Stiff Test

Before the season began, I thought that Ohio State would lose a game during the regular season. I marked that game like this one against Oregon, mainly because I was high on the Ducks' defense and thought that C.J. Stroud might not yet be settled into the collegiate game.

And, while I think Oregon's defense will be a tall task, and I do think that Stroud could be in for a difficult matchup, there are too many uncertainties for the Ducks on the offensive side of the ball for me to pick the upset.

But I do think this game will be close. Anthony Brown has much more experience than Stroud and has a variety of weapons to make it interesting, and running backs C.J. Verdell and Travis Dye could spark something on the ground much like Minnesota's Mohamed Ibrahim did.

However, I think Ohio State has too many weapons on offense to get completely stifled, and the defense did enough to make me think that Oregon will struggle as much as it did against Fresno State. All of that, plus the questionable status of star defensive end Kayvon Thibodeaux, has me flipping my decision from this summer.

Ohio State 31, Oregon 24

Patrick Mayhorn: Stroud Struggles, Buckeyes Survive

Count me as a skeptic when it comes to new Ohio State starting quarterback C.J. Stroud, at least this early in his career. The redshirt freshman signal-caller flashed plenty of talent in his first passes for the Buckeyes, completing 13 of his 23 passes against Minnesota for four scores and nearly 300 yards, but how many of those yards are actually his?

That improved second half was almost entirely comprised of big plays made after the catch, and though it's hard to fault Stroud for that - any quarterback in America would love to have receivers like these that can do that - but it's hard for me to take much away from it either. The Stroud I saw got the job done in the second half by completing open passes to two of the best receivers in the country.

Those receivers may not be so open when running against the Oregon secondary, and the throws may not be so easy with the Oregon pass rush giving Ohio State's offensive line much more of a challenge than Minnesota could ever dream of. No one in the country will be able to prevent Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave from breaking a few loose, and I think the Ohio State running game is in for a big day on Saturday, but I have to think that Oregon's defense is at least a touchdown better than Minnesota's is, and the Gopher group gave up just 38 points to the Buckeye offense, 28 of which came in the second half as the depth started to set in.

Unfortunately for Mario Cristobal, I think Minnesota does have the edge on Oregon offensively, and I think that's going to make the difference here. Anthony Brown doesn't have what it takes to truly punish a rough Ohio State secondary, and this offensive line isn't on Minnesota's level on the ground. Ohio State's offense falters in efficiency but generates enough big plays to win, while Oregon's is unable to find enough of its own to keep up, despite a valiant effort from its own defense.

Ohio State 31, Oregon 21

Mark Rea: Look For OSU To Pound On Ducks

Take whatever you think you learned about Ohio State from its season-opening performance and forget it. Oregon and Minnesota have about as much in common as rabbits and freight trains. This week, there won't be any seven-man offensive lines, no power formations, and most importantly, no Mo Ibrahim to worry about.

But don't be fooled into thinking this is the tilt-a-whirl, point-a-minute Ducks coached by Chip Kelly from a decade ago. They're fast, but not that fast. They're physical on defense, but not that physical – and they'll be even less so if linebackers Kayvon Thibodeaux (ankle) and Dru Mathis (knee) can't go. QB Anthony Brown is capable, but he's certainly no Marcus Mariota.

I keep going back to the 2014 national championship game when Oregon and its fan base were positive the Ducks were going to win. But midway through the third quarter, after the Buckeyes had pounded on them, Oregon was completely out of gas. I look for more of the same tomorrow.

Ohio State 45, Oregon 24