

Buckeye Leaves: Cage, Harrison, Ruggles, Smith And Smith-Njigba Earn Stickers



Chase Brown, BSB: Noah Ruggles is an unstoppable kicking machine. When he came to Columbus in the spring, the Buckeyes already had Jake Seibert. Still, the two kickers competed throughout fall camp and Ruggles won the starting job. In Ohio State's eight games, Ruggles has yet to miss a kick — he is a perfect 11 for 11 when attempting field goals and 47 for 47 in his point-after attempts this season, including four field goals and three extra points against Penn State.

Ruggles is a model for consistency, and when the Buckeyes needed him most, he showed up. There will come a time in the future when Ohio State will rely on him again, and I feel confident that the former North Carolina transfer will be up for the task.

After tonight's game, he gets a Buckeye leaf from me. Maybe he'll get one down the road, too.

Patrick Mayhorn, BSB: It wasn't necessarily a day to remember for the Ohio State offense, which scored only one touchdown in its many trips to the red zone and struggled at times to stay out of its own way with procedural penalties, but wideout Jaxon Smith-Njigba was again a bright spot for the Buckeyes. He has emerged as a legitimate star at wide receiver, leading the team in receiving yards with 97 on six receptions, including a huge 58-yard catch-and-run that helped to pump up an otherwise lackluster passing attack.

Mark Rea, BSB: Ohio State's defense made some good plays against Penn State, and made some not-so-good ones, too. One that fits in the former category was Buckeye leaf-worthy. Fifth-year senior defensive tackle Jerron Cage, who goes at 6-2 and 305 pounds, got to showcase a little bit of big-man speed late in the second quarter with his scoop-and-score fumble recovery of 57 yards. Cage gets two leaves for the score, but Tyreke Smith (who got credit for the sack) and Zach Harrison (who cleaned up afterward) also deserve a leaf apiece.