

Buckeye Leaves: Emeka Egbuka, Davison Igbinosun, Jack Sawyer and Sonny Styles Lead Ohio State To 35-7 Win Over Iowa



As is often the case this season, Ohio State shrugged off a slow start in the first half to come away with a convincing 35-7 win over Iowa Saturday afternoon at Ohio Stadium, outscoring the Hawkeyes 35-7 in the second half and allowing just 4.3 yards per rush on the ground.

There were many players worthy of receiving Buckeye Leaves, but BSB narrowed it down to three key impact players from the win.

Patrick Engels:

I'm handing my Buckeye Leaf out to junior linebacker Sonny Styles, who may have had his best game at Ohio State to date.

Prior to the Iowa game, there was a conversation in our Buckeye Sports Bulletin Fan Forum about Styles making little impact in his first four games at linebacker, but the former safety put those concerns to bed against the Hawkeyes.

Styles was a constant force at or behind the line of scrimmage for the Buckeyes' defense, often coming in for some booming hits that halted the momentum of star Iowa running back Kaleb Johnson. His most notable sequence may have been at the end of the second half, when he sprinted into the backfield and laid a big hit on backup tailback Juzian Patterson, then stopped Johnson on a screen pass one later on third-and-15 to force a punt.

These two tackles did not lead to any points for the Buckeyes at the end of the half, but it still helped establish a physical tone for an Ohio State defense who allowed just 4.3 rushing yards per attempt and had nine tackles for loss.

Bobby Gorbett:

Senior wide receiver Emeka Egbuka continued his hot start to the season, after an injury-plagued 2023, going for three touchdowns in Ohio State's dominant win.

Egbuka might not have had the jaw-dropping highlight plays that fellow wide receiver Jeremiah Smith had, but leading the team with nine catches, the veteran receiver was a reliable security blanket for graduate senior quarterback Will Howard.

Egbuka's first touchdown was Ohio State's only touchdown of the first half. Egbuka didn't create a ton of separation on the play, but he didn't need to. Howard delivered a beautiful throw on the run, and Egbuka made a difficult contested catch through contact right at the goal line to get Ohio State on the board.

Egbuka wasn't done there. Instead, he made a similarly tough, contested catch in the third quarter for a 15-yard touchdown to put the Buckeyes up 28-0.

If he hadn't done so with his previous touchdown grab, the veteran receiver put the nail in the Hawkeyes' coffin with his third touchdown reception of the game early in the fourth quarter on a short three-yard catch from Howard to put the Buckeyes up 35-0.

Egbuka's three-touchdown performance was a career-high. Through five games, Egbuka's five touchdowns are more than he had in his entire 2023 season, a year in which he had four touchdowns.

In addition to his career day as a touchdown scorer, Egbuka finished the game with nine catches for 71 yards.

Cameron Moone:

My Buckeye Leaf will go to Davison Igbinosun. The former Ole Miss transfer has been a reliable cornerback for Ohio State the past two seasons and his play was punctuated with his interception against the Hawkeyes Saturday in the third quarter as it sealed the deal.

Igbinosun has been Ohio State's most tested corner in coverage and responded well against the Hawkeyes offense. Iowa passed for just 110 yards while Igbinosun notched the lone interception of the game for the Buckeyes, picking off former Michigan quarterback Cade McNamara in his homecoming game against Ohio State.

Igbinosun's interception was his first of the season and first at Ohio State, further cementing himself as a cornerstone contributor to the Buckeye defense in their quest of a national championship.

Greg Wilson:

Defensive end Jack Sawyer gets my Buckeye Leaf in what was another very strong game for the senior. From the very first drive, the entire Ohio State defensive line was both in the face of Iowa quarterback Cade McNamara forcing a lot of pressure, and Sawyer was a big part of that.

To start the second half for the defense, when the Buckeyes needed some momentum, the Hawkeyes offense stepped onto the field but weren't there for long due to Sawyer getting to the backfield again for a strip sack, recovered at the Iowa 19-yard line. That forced fumble set up Howard's 4-yard

touchdown run on the next Buckeye drive.

Sawyer finished the game with three tackles, 1.5 for loss and 1.5 sacks. He wasn't on the stat sheet too much, but when he did get his name on there they were big plays.