

Buckeye Leaves: No. 4 Ohio State Outlasts No. 15 TCU In 40-28 Shootout



Ohio State survived TCU on Saturday at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, as the No. 4 Buckeyes (3-0, 1-0 Big Ten) capped their 40-28 triumph with 27 points in the second half.

Who stood out for OSU on its way to overcoming a third-quarter deficit and making a statement in its biggest win of the young season? BSB makes its picks as staff members hand out their Buckeye Leaves.

James Grega

There are three different players I could feel comfortable giving my Buckeye Leaf to. Dwayne Haskins, J.K. Dobbins and Dre'Mont Jones are all deserving, but I am going with Jones, who changed the game up front.

When Ohio State needed a play on defense, he deflected passes at the line of scrimmage, came up with a critical sack and the play of the game, an interception returned for a touchdown on a shovel pass attempt from Shawn Robinson. His play elevated when Nick Bosa went out with an injury, and Jones showed he is just as important to this Ohio State defense as Bosa. He gets my Buckeye Leaf.

Haskins, Dobbins and even Mike Weber made critical plays on offense as well and they both deserve honorable mention nods. Haskins' performance against a Gary Patterson coaches defense was incredible and I think Haskins is a legitimate Heisman candidate.

Joe Dempsey

Ohio State standout defensive end Nick Bosa went down with an injury and junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones stepped up in his absence.

With TCU facing third-and-5 from its own 30-yard line and Ohio State trailing 21-19 with 6:04 left in the third quarter, Jones intercepted a Shawn Robinson shovel pass and returned it for a game-changing touchdown.

The 6-foot-3, 286-pound lineman also teamed up with Robert Landers for a tone-setting stop on a first-down handoff during the Horned Frogs first drive of the second half.

Jones also had a tackle for loss on a first-down run later in the third quarter leading to a punt. He finished with six tackles (four solo), one sack, two tackles for loss and one pass breakup in addition to the pick-6.

Garrett Stepien

As noted by James and Joe, there are actually a few players with an argument for Buckeye Leaves after Ohio State overcame TCU. From start to finish, adversity surfaced against the Buckeyes and forced several names to step up in critical situations for their eventual 27-7 run over the final 21:58 of the ballgame.

But, to me, OSU doesn't get there without Ryan Day. The acting head coach guided Ohio State to 3-0 in head coach Urban Meyer's absence, keeping the Buckeyes focused out of halftime despite their 14-13 deficit — which grew to 21-13 with under 11 minutes left in the third quarter.

After the first two weeks saw OSU pulverize inferior opponents, we wondered what would happen when it faced adversity. With an injury to Ohio State's best player in Bosa, among other obstacles, the Buckeyes didn't flinch.

Tons of credit rightfully goes to the rest of OSU's leadership, from the upperclassmen-laden units and seven team captains onto every other coach on staff responsible for upholding the program culture during Meyer's three-game suspension. However, the 39-year-old Day proved he was indeed "built for this" as mentor and UCLA head coach Chip Kelly stressed at the start of his tenure as acting head coach, navigating Ohio State to an unblemished start with an exclamation-point comeback.

Tim Moody

While I was sitting in the postgame press conference after this game, I thought a lot about how I should give a Buckeye Leaf to. And I really couldn't decide. J.K. Dobbins was great. Dwayne Haskins was impeccable. K.J. Hill, Dre'Mont Jones and Nick Bosa were dominant as well.

When I got back to the press box, though, I realized that it was an easy question: Ryan Day gets my Buckeye Leaf this week. He went 3-0 as Ohio State's acting head coach, guiding the team through the most adversity the program has seen in a long, long time. Day's work as Ohio State's top dog shouldn't go unnoticed. He's a star, and he'll be running his own program soon.

[divider line_type="Full Width Line" line_thickness="2" divider_color="default"]
[nectar_btn size="jumbo" button_style="regular" button_color_2="Accent-Color" icon_family="none" url="http://www.buckeyesports.com/boards/" text="Join The Conversation"]