

Buckeyes Leaves: Lathan Ransom, Arvell Reese, Jeremiah Smith Impress In 52-6 Win Over Akron



It might not have looked how Buckeye fans hoped early on, but after Ohio State was able to knock off the rust they seemed to have, they were able to put together a high-scoring second half in the 52-6 win over Akron on Saturday.

While there were many performances that might have deserved a Buckeye Leaf, here's who we landed on after the win:

Patrick Engels: I'm handing my Buckeye Leaf out to linebacker Arvell Reese, who filled in admirably for the injured Cody Simon at linebacker despite not getting the start, putting together one of the top performances on the Buckeyes' defense.

The junior Reese was all over the field for Ohio State in its season opener, often hustling from sideline to sideline to make some impressive plays. He ended the day with four tackles and a tackle for loss, his lone TFL being a stop on quarterback Ben Finley early in the third quarter.

Reese, who defensive coordinator Jim Knowles and others have consistently lauded over the offseason for the improvements he has made, may not get as much time on the field next week if Simon comes back from his injury. But his all-around performance at Ohio Stadium Saturday may make it tough for Knowles and the staff to keep him off the field in some capacity moving forward

Bobby Gorbett: I'm giving my Buckeye Leaf out to the defensive touchdown scorer himself, Lathan Ransom. The fifth-year senior safety was the most energetic of the Buckeyes defense, flying around to record nine total tackles including two for loss.

Although Ransom may have had a slip-up in pass coverage against Akron tight end Jake Newell which

led to one of the Zips' longest plays, he will rightfully be remembered for the 27-yard fumble returned for a touchdown, that propelled the Buckeyes to a dominant second half performance.

Ransom's nine total tackles and two tackles for loss, which primarily came while the game was slightly still in doubt, were both team-highs for the Buckeyes, and the second most of his career. In a thin Safety room, Ransom's health and production is vital for the Buckeyes the rest of the way.

Greg Wilson: My Buckeye Leaf might be the most obvious of the game, but he deserves one nonetheless. Jeremiah Smith came into Ohio State with more hype than possibly any other freshman has ever received so early on. He backed that up in the spring by having highlight catches posted all over social media. Those were all well and good, but he hadn't done anything "rea;" for the Buckeyes yet.

He came out for his very first game as a true freshman and showed that the hype was very well deserved, finishing as the Buckeyes leading pass catcher with six catches for 92 yards and two touchdowns.

It was only one game, but the way that his Buckeye teammates have been talking about him, it wouldn't be a surprise to see this continue throughout the season. He's going to have to continue to prove himself in every game, but the noise around Smith might be even louder after his first game in scarlet and gray, and deservedly so.