

# Buckeyes Preparing For Strong Maryland Defense



With Big Ten play starting, Ohio State will be going up against a team that might get overlooked in the east division in Maryland. At 5-0, they have almost earned their way into the AP top 25 poll with 81 votes, coming in just behind No. 25 Louisville which received 90 votes.

The Taulia Tagovailoa led offense is certainly worth Ohio State's attention, which Ryan Day said it has all of right now, but the Terrapins defense is also something they can't skip over either.

"Sound, strong up front, athletic in the back end," Day said. "They've replaced some really good DBs last year with more good DBs. I think the safeties are playing well, the corners are excellent. The linebackers are more experienced this year playing faster... They don't give up a lot of big plays and they create turnovers."

Through five games, the Terrapins have earned the respect of Day and the Buckeyes. Since Nov. 26, 2022, against Rutgers, they are giving up fewer than 20 points per game, averaging only nine points given up in those seven games. The last time they gave up more than 20 was the week before that streak began in the Nov. 19 game against Ohio State when the Buckeyes put up 43 points. The 13.2 points per game they're allowing this season is 16<sup>th</sup> best in the country to this point.

They have also forced 12 turnovers this season, which is third in the nation. Maryland forced five turnovers against Michigan State on Sept. 23 - three interceptions and two fumbles - and one against Indiana, another interception. Senior cornerback Tarheeb Still leads the team with three interceptions, each coming in the last three games.

Kyle McCord has been good about avoiding turnovers so far this season, even against Notre Dame's strong defense where the only turnovers the Buckeyes had were on downs where they couldn't convert in short yardage. Day has been happy with how McCord has performed, but he expects him to be better every week now, especially with how he ended the game against the Fighting Irish.

“He has to grow up, he has to get better in a lot of different areas, just like everybody else, but it’s good to get that experience,” Day said. “But we all need to be more efficient, we need to finish drives up better. There’s a lot of plays that he wishes he had back (against Notre Dame), but now we’re moving forward. After the bye week we’ve addressed all those things and now the focus is on Maryland.”