

C.J. Stroud Says Flu Was “Bad” Before Michigan Game



Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud met with the media Wednesday to discuss his finish as a Heisman finalist, but as expected, there are still questions about the Buckeyes' loss to Michigan that will send Ohio State to the Rose Bowl on New Year's Day.

Though Ohio State's physicality - or lack thereof - against the Wolverines has come under fire since the 42-27 final, Stroud took to the podium to explain that the Buckeyes were dealing with some outside factors heading into the contest.

"When you take into consideration what we were going through that week preparing for the team up north and everybody kind of having a flu and things like that - of course, I don't make excuses, but you've got to take that into consideration," Stroud said. "It kind of does matter. I'll take Ohio State. I'll take my brothers against anybody."

Michigan pounded Ohio State in the trenches for the entire game. The Wolverines' finished with nearly 300 rushing yards while holding the Buckeyes to just 64 yards, in addition to making things uncomfortable for Stroud, who was sacked four times. On the other side, Ohio State struggled getting pressure, finishing with no sacks of Cade McNamara or J.J. McCarthy.

It's unknown the degree to which the Buckeyes struggled preparing for this game due to the illness sweeping through the program, but Stroud said it had an impact.

"Yeah, it was bad," the redshirt freshman said. "Throughout the week, dudes were dropping out, missing practice. It was kind of bad. It was just a feeling of the flu. I had it myself but I'm feeling a lot better now."

At the end of the day, Stroud said that while it did impact the game, Ohio State still failed in its task, falling to Michigan for the first time since 2011.

"But then you've got to go play. Nobody cares. They didn't care. We don't care. At the end of the day you've got to go do a job, but we fell short," he said. "I credit my team, even somewhat of myself, for just even going out there and still playing. We don't quit. We don't shy away. We still went out there and we battled. I would do it again. I don't care. I'll play with one leg."