

Five Things to Watch For During Ohio State's Matchup With Nebraska



Ohio State takes the field for the first time since its embarrassing 49-20 loss to Purdue on Saturday, with yet another Big Ten West opponent on tap.

Nebraska comes to town with a glimmer of hope for a bowl game, but the Cornhuskers will need to pull the upset in Columbus on Saturday at noon to keep that dream alive.

What follows are our five things to watch for inside the Horseshoe on Saturday as Ohio State attempts to get back into the win column.

1. Red Zone Offense

Urban Meyer and his coaching staff have stressed that red zone offense have been one of the major things worked on during Ohio State's bye week. Tomorrow, we find out if that extra prep time worked.

The coaching staff has hinted that Tate Martell is being considered for situational reps in short yardage or red zone situations, but it has yet to happen. If Martell is not the answer, perhaps an extra tight end in the backfield as a lead blocker is the answer. Regardless of what Ohio State does to fix it, the red zone woes will have to cease if the Buckeyes are to win this game big and get back into the CFP discussion.

2. Wyatt Davis, Chris Olave Playing Time

Meyer said that sophomore lineman Wyatt Davis is the "next man up" this week on the offensive line. With Ohio State's struggles up front in the run game, Davis might not have to wait long to see game action.

At receiver, Ohio State is without Austin Mack for the foreseeable future and Meyer said that freshman Chris Olave has been working into the receiver rotation behind Binjimen Victor and others. Meyer has hinted at younger players getting significant reps in the past, yet those reps have never come about. It will be curious to see if Olave is used and if so, will he be able to make an impact?

3. Secondary Rotation

Shaun Wade has played all over the field for Ohio State this season, lining up as a nickel back, corner and safety. However, with the Buckeyes' struggles at safety this season, Wade could be asked to play even more in the back end of OSU's defense with Jordan Fuller.

Wade himself hasn't been stellar all season, but Isaiah Pryor has struggled when taking proper angles and making plays in space. Wade and the Ohio State secondary figures to be tested early and often by a Nebraska offense that is starting to find its rhythm in recent weeks.

4. Rush Offense

Ohio State's run game has struggled not just in the red zone, but on all ends of the field. What will the Buckeyes do to jump start J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber?

The smart money would be on a personnel change, but that doesn't seem to be in the cards, at least at the start of the game. Ohio State has used two-tight end sets this season, but that hasn't done much to help the run game. If Martell isn't the answer, it will be curious to see what the Buckeyes do to fix it. Dwayne Haskins, despite his numbers, needs a consistent run game to win games.

5. Adrian Martinez

A former Ohio State target on the recruiting trail, Martinez is probably the most dynamic quarterback the Buckeyes play this season, including the likes of Trace McSorley.

Containing Martinez in the pocket will be the first priority, but the true freshman is also dangerous with his arm. Last season, JD Spielman caught 11 passes against the Buckeyes for 200 yards and a score. He returns this season as one of Martinez' favorite targets along with Stanley Morgan, Jr. It will be curious to see how the Buckeyes plan to contain the dynamic signal caller.