Four Ohio State Offensive Linemen Named Players Of The Game For Penn State Win

Ohio State's banged-up offensive line made a statement during the Buckeyes' 20-13 road win over then-No. 3 Penn State, helping the Buckeyes rush for 176 yards on 22 carries and finish off the game with 11 straight runs for 58 yards, and those efforts were rewarded a day after the win when four of the starting front five were named Offensive Players of the Game.

Ohio State extended the honor to left tackle Donovan Jackson, left guard Carson Hinzman, center Seth McLaughlin and right tackle Josh Fryar following the win, each of them taking home the Player of the Game distinction for the first time this season.

Although McLaughlin and Fryar have led Ohio State's offensive line at their respective positions for the entire year, Jackson and Hinzman had to play a different role than expected against a formidable Nittany Lions defensive front. With both Josh Simmons and Zen Michalski out at left tackle, the Buckeyes opted to slide the two-time All-Big Ten left guard Jackson over to tackle, a position he had yet to play in his four-year Ohio State career.

Jackson did give up two sacks to star Penn State defensive end Abdul Carter and four pressures according to Pro Football Focus, but he still performed admirably in his new role, especially when it mattered most in the fourth quarter.

Hinzman, who was Ohio State's starting center for the entire 2023 regular season before the Buckeyes sought an upgrade with McLaughlin, also made the most of his opportunity in his first start at left guard.

After occupying a reserve role for the first seven games of the season, the redshirt sophomore posted the highest PFF final grade among the five offensive linemen against the Nittany Lions at 69.0, including an impressive 86.4 rating in pass protection.

Ohio State also gave out two Player of the Game honors out on defense, giving the honors out to both safety Caleb Downs and cornerback Daivson Igbinosun.

Downs, a midseason first-team AP All-American, earns the Defensive Player of the Game nod for the second time this season — the first being against Michigan State on Sept. 28 — grading out a champion at 95 percent.

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The former Alabama SEC Freshman of the Year recorded four tackles against the Nittany Lions, but those stats were not indicative of the full impact he made at Beaver Stadium. He helped contain star Penn State tight end Tyler Warren for most of the game and seemed to be all over the field making plays, perhaps none more impressive than his shoestring tackle on running back Nick Singleton in the third quarter that turned what could have been a much longer run into just a 4-yard gain.

Igbinosun also earns the Defensive Player of the Game honor for the first time this season — the other one being against Marshall — after grading out a champion at 93 percent. The former Ole Miss transfer did have a perfect outing against the Nittany Lions, giving up a 21-yard completion to wideout Harrison Wallace III while simultaneously committing a holding penalty, but he stood up when it mattered most.

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Igbinosun made one of the biggest plays of the game on the very next snap, taking what could have been an end-of-first-half touchdown for Wallace off the board by deflecting the Drew Allar pass and coming away with an improbable interception to preserve a 14-10 lead for the Buckeyes at the half.

In addition to the game-changing interception, Igbinosun also added four tackles (two assisted and two solo) and a pass breakup in the win, putting a bow on what might be the best game of his two-year Ohio State career as of Week 11 of the 2024 season.