

Game Recap: Ohio State Shuts Out Western Michigan 56-0



Ohio State scored on its first three possessions and easily dismantled Western Michigan 56-0 at Ohio Stadium on Saturday.

Quinshon Judkins had a pair of 23-yard touchdown runs and Will Howard ran for one score and passed for another when the Buckeyes (2-0) took a 35-0 halftime lead over the Broncos (0-2) .

Howard finished 18 of 26 for passing 292 yards and a touchdown. Judkins rushed for 108 yards on nine carries and Henderson added 66 yards and two TDs on 10 runs.

Wide receiver Jeremiah Smith, the No. 1 recruit nationally in the 2024 class, made five catches for 119 yards before a night time crowd of 102,665. Emeka Egbuka's five catches went for 98 yards.

Ohio State gained 683 yards.

Not Messing Around

Western Michigan went three-and-out on the game's first possession, highlighted by a Cody Simon 7-yard sack on third-and-4 from the 31.

After a punt, the Buckeyes started from their 45 and quickly moved the 55 yards in six plays and 2:35 for a 7-0 lead on Henderson's run from the 3.

Gee Scott Jr. had a 5-yard catch to begin the series and Smith followed with a grab for 10 to the 40. Egbuka snared a pass for 21 yards to the 9. Henderson ran for 6 before completing the drive on the next snap at 11:04.

The Broncos on their second series got two third-down conversions and a 19-yard reception by Anthony Sambucci but the drive stalled at the 25 and Luka Zurak missed a 42-yard field goal try to the right.

Smith electrified the crowd with a 70-yard catch-and-run TD at the 4:00 mark for a 14-0 score. It was first-and-20 from the 30 after a holding penalty when Howard hit Smith on a slant at the 37. He juked a defender and no one could catch him. The four-play drive went 75 yards in 2:28.

The Buckeyes made it look easy to take a 21-0 lead at 1:02 of the first quarter, racing 73 yards in five plays while consuming 1:39, ending with a 23-yard run by Judkins.

Egbuka sandwiched 15- and 17-yard catches with Smith's 18 yarder. After an incomplection from the 23 down the middle to Jelani Thurman, Howard pitched right to Judkins and he raced to the end zone.

The Buckeyes lost senior cornerback Denzel Burke for targeting Jaden Dixon when the Broncos got the ball back. Jermaine Mathews Jr. replaced Burke.

Howard was 10 of 11 for 177 yards and Smith had three catches for 98 yards in the first quarter.

Early in the second quarter, an 80-yard Judkins TD run was nullified by a holding penalty on wide receiver Bryson Rodgers.

After exchanging punts, Judkins finally got his second TD, this time going left for 23 yards at 8:28 to extend the advantage to 28-0.

The first of four plays in the 65-yard, 1:17 drive was a 35-yard Egbuka catch to the 30. An incomplection to Egbuka led to Henderson's rush for 7 to set up the score.

Yet another Western Michigan punt allowed the Buckeyes the opportunity to slice up the defense again and they did so as Howard ran for a 6-yard TD with 4:20 left to make it 35-0.

Using six plays to go 70 yards in 2:34, Judkins was the catalyst with a 14-yard run on the first play. Carnell Tate gathered a 36-yard throw to the 20. On third-and-5, Henderson rammed his way 9 yards to the 6. From there, Howard faked a handoff to Henderson and ran to the right pylon for the six points.

The Buckeyes amassed 406 yards in the first half - 274 through the air and 132 on the ground with 17 first downs compared to 94 total yards and six firsts for the Broncos.

Howard in the first half completed 15 of 22 for 274 yards and a TD with Smith making five catches for 119 yards and a TD. Judkins rushed for 82 yards.

Second Half

The Buckeyes took advantage of a 37-yard punt to start from the Broncos 40 to up the count to 42-0 at 6:44 of the third quarter. The big play was a 19-yard catch by Brandon Inniss to the 19.

Henderson ran for 3 then the final 16 at the end of the six-play, 3:15 series.

Backup Devin Brown replaced Howard on the series beginning with 4:18 remaining in the third quarter. He guided the Buckeyes 81 yards on eight plays and 4:13 to make it 49-0 when freshman James Peoples ran it in from 12 yards.

Peoples also had an 11-yard run and Brown connected with Rodgers and Jayden Ballard for 12 apiece and 27-yarder to Inniss.

Heralded freshman Julian Sayin, who transferred from Alabama, took over for Brown with 7:06 to play and threw a 55-yard touchdown to Christian Bennett with 5:01 left for the final score.