

Key Matchup: Ohio State's Defense Vs. Nebraska QB Phenom Adrian Martinez



Ohio State came away with a win the last time it faced a dual-threat quarterback in the Big Ten, but that wasn't because the Buckeyes found a way to slow down Penn State quarterback Trace McSorley. In fact, McSorley had a career day against Ohio State in what ended up being a 27-26 come-from-behind victory for head coach Urban Meyer's team.

Despite the loss, McSorley exposed the Buckeye defense by throwing for 286 yards and two scores while doing perhaps more damage on the ground with 175 yards on 25 carries, including a long of 51.

On Saturday, the Buckeyes are set to face another talented dual-threat quarterback in Nebraska's Adrian Martinez, a freshman whom Ohio State briefly recruited last year.

Amid a nightmare 2-6 start to head coach Scott Frost's career in Lincoln, Neb., Martinez has been a bright spot despite some early injury issues. In seven starts, Martinez has thrown for 1,656 yards with a 66.3 completion percentage and 11 touchdowns to just six interceptions. He's also done a ton of damage with his legs, averaging 58.3 yards per game on the ground with another four scores.

Coming off a game in which they 20 missed tackles, the Ohio State defense will have to find a way to get Martinez on the ground when he has chances to make plays in space with his legs.

"Elite guy," Meyer said Monday when asked about Martinez. "He's a dual guy that can run and pass. He's doing a very good job. The last two games he's done a great job."

Martinez and the Cornhuskers are traveling to Columbus with a two-game winning streak in tow. First, they dispatched Minnesota, 53-28, before beating Bethune-Cookman, 45-9, the following week.

Against the Golden Gophers, Martinez ran 15 times for 125 yards and a score while completing 25 of 29 passes for 276 yards and three touchdowns. A week later, he wasn't asked to do as much against an overmatched opponent but still threw for 213 yards and a pair of scores.

Meyer described Martinez and the Nebraska offense as "tough to defend," while sophomore linebacker Tuf Borland had praise for Ohio State's upcoming opponent as well, noting that Martinez can attack a defense in multiple ways.

“He’s a playmaker,” Borland said. “He’s going to spread the ball around, and he makes the offense go. We’ll have our work cut out for us.”

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