

Ohio State Names Caleb Downs, Jeremiah Smith and David Adolph Players of Game Against Michigan State



Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles opted not to name a Defensive Player of the Game after the unit's poor first-half performance against Marshall in Week 5, but he did feel like there was one Silver Bullet who made enough plays to be worthy of receiving that honor following the 38-7 road win over Michigan State on Saturday night.

Knowles and Ohio State's staff awarded that title to sophomore safety Caleb Downs, who, after a rather quiet statistical start to his Buckeye career, had his breakout game in the Scarlet and Gray.

The former Alabama transfer totaled a tied-for-team high six tackles against the Spartans, including three solo and one tackle for loss, a mark that almost matched the season total he had coming into the game of eight stops.

Downs, who graded out a champion at 89 percent, had perhaps his most impactful tackle later in the first half when he quickly identified a third-and-11 screen pass to Spartans wideout Aziah Johnson and knocked him down 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage. It was a high IQ play that forced Michigan State to punt and eventually surrender another touchdown score to the Buckeyes before the half ended.

Downs had his most impactful performance as a Buckeye to date against Michigan State, and that may be the same for true freshman wide receiver Jeremiah Smith, who was named the team's Offensive Player of the Game after totaling five receptions for 82 yards and a touchdown along with a 19-yard rushing touchdown, grading out a champion at 91 percent.

Smith, like Downs, helped put the game away for the Buckeyes with several big-time plays in the second quarter. He first took an end-around reverse handoff from Will Howard to the end zone for a 19-yard score, and then hauled in a pair of spectacular one-handed catches two drives later — the first a 27-yard gain that put the Buckeyes in the red zone and the second 17-yard score on third-and-10 to extend Ohio

State's lead to 24-7 before halftime — that wowed those who watched.

Ohio State also named junior wide receiver David Adolph as its Special Teams Player of the Game against the Spartans. Adolph did not record a statistic, but he was on the field often on special teams, garnering 13 snaps for that unit.

The Dublin, Ohio, native did not see the field on offense against the Spartans, but he does have a reception on the season, a 10-yard catch in the fourth quarter of Ohio State's win over Marshall that was his first of his career.